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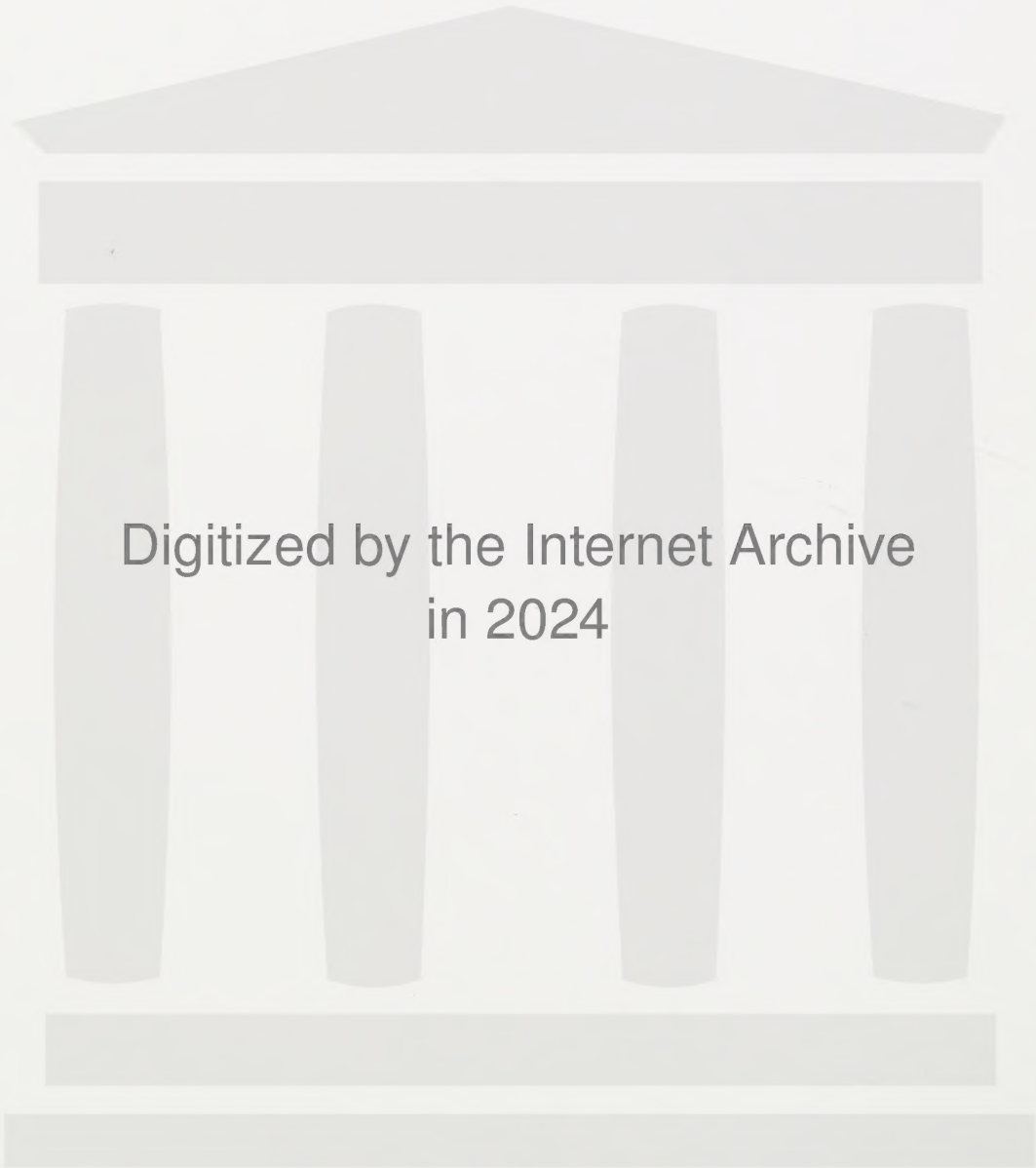
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Fall 1976

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FROM THE EDITORS

LILITH liveth! After more than two years of planning, the editors of LILITH magazine are delighted to know that you are at this very moment reading the premiere issue.

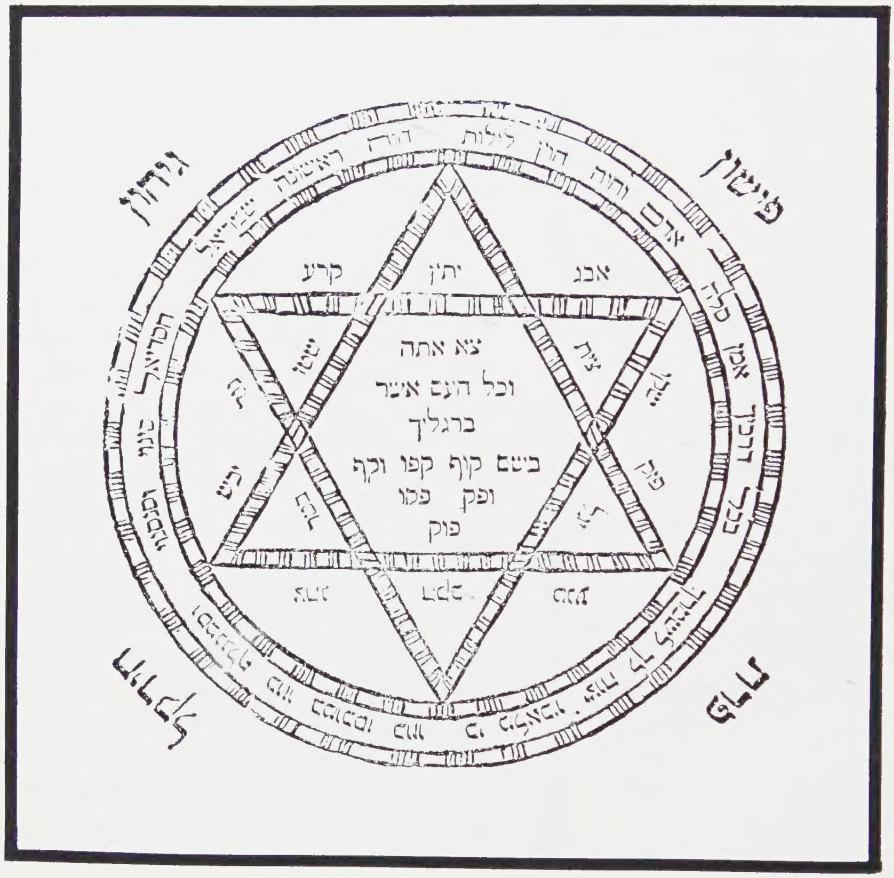
LILITH is named for Adam's legendary first companion and his equal. Lilith predated Eve, and was originally the embodiment of independent womanhood.

The goal of LILITH, an independent quarterly published by the non-profit Lilith Publications, Inc., is to foster discussion of Jewish women's issues and put them on the agenda of the Jewish community, with a view to giving women — who are more than 50% of the world's Jews — greater choices in Jewish life.

As women, we are attracted to much of the ideology of the general women's movement; as Jews, we recognize that we have particular concerns not always shared by other groups. How do we reconcile our sense of ourselves as worthy individuals while identifying with a religious and social structure that has limited women's options in the synagogue, the home and the community at large?

There is no other ongoing forum where we can explore these concerns and conflicts, which affect us all regardless of age or background. We need to know what Judaism can offer feminism, and how the women's movement may change us as Jews. For example: Is marriage necessary for Jewish continuity, or merely oppressive to women? Is volunteer work for the Jewish Establishment exploiting us, or is it a valid form of *tzedakah*? Why has Jewish history been the history of Jewish men? As this premiere issue demonstrates, we don't intend to construct rigid dogma; we want to provide for different viewpoints, and we invite articles and letters and questions.

The first issue of LILITH — which we originally planned as a smorgasbord of several topics we will focus on in depth in forthcoming issues — evolved before our very eyes into a collection of articles about stereotypes. In history, literature, religious practice and personal relations, Jewish women have come to accept the concepts of ourselves that others have created for us. Most of the pieces in this landmark issue of LILITH describe in one form or another what we must know about the influences that have shaped us, so that we can move forward and shape our own futures.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ופק פמו
פוק

THE LILITH QUESTION

By Aviva Cantor Zuckoff

After the Holy One created the first human being, Adam, He said: "It is not good for Adam to be alone." He created a woman, also from the earth, and called her Lilith.

They quarreled immediately. She said: "I will not lie below you." He said, "I will not lie below you, but above you. For you are fit to be below me and I above you."

She responded: "We are both equal because we both come from the earth."

Neither listened to the other. When Lilith realized what was happening, she pronounced the Ineffable Name of God and flew off into the air.

Adam rose in prayer before the Creator, saying, "The woman you gave me has fled from me." Immediately the Holy One sent three angels after her.

The Holy One said to Adam: "If she wants to return, all the better. If not, she will have to accept that one hundred of her children will die every day."

The angels went after her, finally locating her in the sea, in the powerful waters in which the Egyptians were destined to perish. They told her what God had said, and she did not want to return. . . . . Alphabet of Ben Sira 23a-b

"And God created the human species in His own image . . . male and female created He them." (Genesis: 1:27)

The most ancient Biblical account of the Creation relates that God created the first man and the first woman at the same time. Jewish legends tell us that this woman was Lilith.

Lilith, we learn, felt herself to be Adam's equal ("We are both from the earth") but Adam refused to accept her equality. Lilith, determined to retain her independence and dignity, and choosing loneliness over subservience, flew away from Adam and the Garden of Eden.

Jewish tradition characterized Lilith after her escape from Adam as a demon and embellished this reputation with legend upon legend of her vengeful activities to harm children and women who give birth in rooms without industrial-strength amulets to ward her off. The *Alphabet of Ben Sira* provides us with the most coherent account of the Lilith myth, embodying features of past legends and providing the basis for future additions. The *Alphabet* tells of Lilith's struggle for equality and her escape, Adam's complaint to God, and the dispatching of three angels to bring his recalcitrant mate back. She refused to return and accepted the punishment of 100 of her "demon children" dying daily, for which she takes revenge. The demonic Lilith overshadowed the original independent Lilith in all subsequent legends to the point where the name Lilith engendered only the association of demon/witch. It is this demonic image which has both reflected and shaped men's thoughts and feelings about women for generations. But the time for reassessment of the Lilith myth has arrived.

Who is Lilith? Or, more to the point, which is the true, the real Lilith – the rebel against tyranny or the wild-haired vengeful witch? Is Lilith a myth without historical basis, and, if so, why was it necessary to invent her? Or does she embody a clue to our past and if so, what?

Is Lilith a model for Jewish women and if so, can only part of her history constitute the model? Should we forget her revolt because of her later (alleged!) crimes and thus reject her; or should we forget her later crimes and focus only on her revolt because only this is significant; or do both parts have value for us?

All these are aspects of the The Lilith Question.

Let's begin by taking a close look at Lilith as she appears in the *Alphabet of Ben Sira*. We immediately see how significant it is that she perceived herself as an equal to Adam, to man; her consciousness of equality was not only high, but it was a given, a natural thought process. Anything less than equality was unthought of and unthinkable, unnatural.

Not only does Lilith immediately recognize tyranny for what it is, but she immediately resists it, too. Nowhere do we see her complain (as Adam does); she states her case and takes risks for her dignity. She is courageous and decisive, willing to accept the consequences of her action.

Her strength of character and commitment to self is inspiring. For independence and freedom from tyranny she is prepared to forsake the economic security of the Garden of Eden and to accept loneliness and exclusion from society. Her strength of character also comes through in her taking total responsibility for her life. Note that she does not appeal to God to straighten out her relationship with Adam. She draws on her own strength; she is self-nurturing, self-sustaining.

Lilith is a *powerful* female. She radiates strength,

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assertiveness; she refuses to cooperate in her own victimization. By acknowledging Lilith's revolt and even in telling of her vengeful activities, myth-makers also acknowledge Lilith's power. Even if we accept Lilith's vengeful activities (and whether or not to accept them is a subject we will deal with later), we can regard them as having originated in self-defense against male domination and as a consequence of having to fight on alone, century after century, for her independence. What men are saying, really is that Lilith "fights dirty." But this is a meaningless concept designed to keep women from developing and utilizing their strength to fight, period. Lilith, it must be emphasized, is a fighter and a fighter in a good cause.

Lilith. Sumerian terra-cotta relief, ca. 2,000 B.C..

Finally, besides having physical power, she has spiritual power and knowledge. She utters God's secret name and flies off to the Red Sea (significantly, the scene of the Jews' transition from the security of bondage in Egypt to the insecurity of freedom in the desert). Adam did not know or utter the Ineffable Name. But Lilith is a knower of secret wisdom.

We must bear in mind here that the Lilith stories, like the rest of our tradition, were written by men. We know that most of whatever women have invented or created has been destroyed or discounted, and very little has come down to us, certainly nothing in its pure, original form. We must consider the possibility that the story of Lilith's revolt may be one of women's creations which was told by mother to daughter over many generations before surfacing in the *Alphabet* and then being contaminated with male bias.

The Lilith story may be a clue to our own history, reflecting some assertive, rebellious behavior of women in the past. Lilith may represent a whole group, a whole generation; or she may reflect the existence of a type of woman who appeared in generation after generation, a woman who would not be dominated, a woman who demanded equality with man. Or she may embody the thoughts and feelings of women about their equality, even if they could not act on them in their generation. With so few materials about women, particularly of this nature, it would be unthinkable for us to let Lilith be forgotten simply because of the male biases grafted onto the story of her revolt.

These legends of Lilith-as-demon, the vengeful female witch, are, of course, not unique to Jewish culture and tradition. Many scholars theorize that vengeful female deities or demons, like the Greek *hecatae*, represent the vestiges of the dying Matriarchy or are an attempt by men to discredit the Matriarchy.

What we have to explore are the uniquely Jewish aspects of the Lilith story, and how they relate to the Jewish experience, to Jewish history. After all, Jews lived among many different peoples and were subject to a bombardment of cultural and religious concepts and myths from all sides. What they accepted is important because it shows us what Jews perceived as necessary and appropriate to Jewish life and its continuity. How they transmuted what they accepted is also significant for this reason.

The account of Lilith's revolt in the *Alphabet* is, to the best of my knowledge, intrinsically Jewish; no non-Jewish source tells of a female struggle for equality or gives it as a reason for the vengeful behavior of a female demon. This is especially important to us in exploring how the Lilith myth connects with our unique history.

What is particularly intriguing about the Lilith myth is that most of the legends about her developed in Exile, either after the Babylonian Exile (586 B.C.E.) and certainly after the Roman deportations of Jews into captivity (70 C.E.). Lilith appears in the Babylonian Talmud in rudimentary form; her character is developed in the *Zohar* and other medieval mystical works. No scholar has dated the *Alphabet of Ben Sira* but all agree it was written in the Gaonic period, before 1000 C.E. The Babylonian Talmud, *Zohar, Alphabet* are all texts written or compiled outside Eretz Israel presumably after 70 C.E., although they may draw on earlier legends, oral or written. *[See article by Judy Weinberg.]*

The destruction of the First Jewish Commonwealth in Eretz Israel and the deportation of most of the population to Babylonia was a shock; the destruction of the Second Jewish Commonwealth was a traumatic watershed in Jewish history. It marked the Jews' break from life in their own homeland, to existence as an international minority with no control over their own destiny. For the next 2,000 years (until 1948), Jews would live at the fringes of societies, marginal to their socio-economic structures, their history, culture, religion, politics and passions; subject to the whim of the ruling class; to summary expulsion; to persecution by the law and the lawless; to humiliation; and to murder.

Exile was understood and perceived by Jews as a threat to Jewish survival that had to be endured and overcome.

When the Jews went into Exile, they decided that the only way to survive without a land was through study (create one, two, three Yavnehs). *Halachah* – Jewish law – became the constitution of a Jewish "government in exile" under which scholars made basic decisions. The model role for Jewish men was to be scholars (this model, begun earlier, reached its apotheosis during the Exile).

Even before the Exile, Jewish society was patriarchal. The role of woman under patriarchy is that of enabler. The woman is programmed to submit to and please men, doing whatever it is that men of a particular time or place demand in order to enable them to do their thing and to ensure their "manhood" and power. Part of being an enabler involves withdrawing from the areas of activity that men have marked off as their domain and which, thus, in the absence of women, come to define "manhood." Enabling also means altruism: doing what is in the man's interest, the family's

LILITH SOURCES By Judy Weinberg

If we were to trust all the rabbinic and kabbalistic sources available to us concerning Eve's alleged predecessor, Lilith, we would be forced to believe that she is a "fiery female spirit" who, although frigid, passionately seduces men in their sleep, and who, although sterile and childless, kills one hundred of her demon children daily. Dozens of conflicting Lilith traditions exist. If we are to discover and establish a meaningful image of Lilith, these different traditions must be disentangled strand by strand. While this entire task is not possible within the limited scope of this brief overview, we can begin it.

The first available version of the Creation story which associates the name Lilith with a "first Eve" is included in the *Alphabet of Ben-Sira*, [see box] a work probably written sometime in the Gaonic period (600 - 1000 C.E.). This account merges two separate and distinct traditions – that of the Lilith of the Talmud and that of the "first Eve" of the *midrash* (legends).

Lilith in the Talmud: The personality called "Lilith" in the Talmud shows no connection with Adam at all. From the four specific references to Lilith in the Babylonian Talmud, we learn only that she is a wild-haired and winged creature with nymphomaniac tendencies (*Erubin 100b, Niddah 24b, Shabbat 151b*); and the mother of demons (*Bava Batra 73a*).

Such a characterization of Lilith may have been drawn from the single Biblical mention of "lilith" (*Isaiah 34:14*):

> The wild creatures of the desert shall meet with the jackals, the goat-demon shall call to his fellow, *the lilith* shall also repose there and find for herself a place of rest.

Commentators have often translated "lilith" as "night-monster," associating the name with *layil*, the Hebrew for night; thus, Rabbi Hanina forbids men to sleep alone in a house at night lest they fall prey to her (*Shabbat 151b*). (The Akkadian "*lilitu*," a female wind spirit, is probably a more accurate etymology, however.)

"First Eve": The *midrash* (legends) of *Genesis Rabbah* discusses a "first Eve" but does not mention Lilith. According to Rabbi Aibu, she "returned to dust" (*22:7*). Judah, son of Rabbi Hiya, states that in the beginning God created Eve for Adam, but when Adam saw her being made with sinews and blood, he grew disgusted and became alienated from her. Thereupon God caused this first Eve to return to nothingness and proceeded to create a second Eve for Adam (*18.4*).

Two separate and distinct beings – Lilith of the Talmud and Eve I of the *midrash* – came together into one, to become Lilith, Adam's first mate. We can see this process of integration in the *Alphabet* itself. In the beginning of this account, Lilith is characterized as a woman (*ishah*). By the end of the story, however, her children are called demons (*sheydim*) and she herself has powers which can only be warded off by the mystical means of an amulet. Thus, having equated his protagonist with Lilith of the Talmud, the author was forced to assign her the characteristics attributed to her by that work.

Lilith in Kabbala: The various and often contradictory accounts found in subsequent kabbalistic literature of different periods seem to interweave the scant references of earlier Jewish sources with later myths culled from outside influences. Lilith's image depicted in medieval kabbalistic literature is complex and evil.

Let us first examine the kabbalistic myths of Lilith's creation. The *Alphabet* account is the only version of the story in which Lilith is an independent being, for she was created out of raw materials similar to Adam's.

The *Zohar* (the central work of Jewish mysticism) develops a theory that Adam initially comprised both male and female elements. This is based on Talmudic and midrashic statements that "Adam, who was the first man, had two full faces" (*Brachot 61a , Erubin 18b*). Rabbi Samuel ben Nachman said: "When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the first man, he created him as a hermaphrodite." Rabbi Levi said the same thing:

> When man was created, he was created with two body fronts, and He sawed him in two, so that two bodies resulted, one for the male and one for the female (*Lev. Rab. 14:1.*).*

The *Zohar* picks up on this theme of Adam's bisexuality but now draws the connection with Lilith:

> The female was attached to the side of the male until God cast him into deep slumber . . . God then sawed her off from him and adorned her like a bride and brought her to him, as it is written, "And He took one of his sides and closed up the place with flesh." I have found it stated in an old book that the word "one" here means "one woman" to wit the original Lilith, who was with him and conceived from him. Up to that time, however, she was not a help to him, as it is written, "but for Adam there was not found a helpmeet for him." (*134b*).

Other references in the *Zohar* describe Lilith as a competitor to "the female affixed to his side" (*see III 19a, II 276b, I 19b*).

Yalkut Re'uveni, a seventeenth-century collection, mostly of kabbalistic legends, no longer allows the first woman equal origins with Adam, as did the *Alphabet of Ben-Sira*. A commentary on *Gen.* 2:21 states:

> "In the beginning when the Holy One, blessed be He, created [the first] Eve, He did not create her out of flesh, but rather out of the filth of the earth and sediment." Adam, however, was made only from the earth.

Kabbalistic tradition has numerous portrayals of Lilith as a demon, often linking her to such other female spirits as Naamah, Machlah and Agrat. In fact, Lilith is often confused with them. *Yalkut Re'uveni* claims, for instance, that both Lilith and Naamah had intercourse with Adam and brought forth "plagues to the world." However, elsewhere the *Zohar* identifies Naamah as "the mother of demons" while Lilith, it seems, only functions as their governess:

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interests or society's interests, not one's own.

The Bible portrays women in various positive model enabler roles. In the Exile, it became even more important that Jewish women continue to function as enablers because of the threat to Jewish survival. The enabler role expanded to include doing everything to make possible men's study of the Torah. Lilith is the embodiment of the woman who refuses to be an enabler.

Elizabeth Janeway, in her pioneering study *Man's World, Woman's Place*, points out that every positive role has a negative flip side, a "shadow role." The shrew, she writes, is the shadow role of the public pleasing woman; the bitch, of the private loving woman; the witch, of the all-giving mother. Negative roles support the patriarchal order just as positive ones do; the positive ones are promises, the negative ones, threats.

Lilith is a negative, shadow role, the flip side of Eve. Eve is the enabler ("helpmeet"), Lilith, the disabler; Eve, the "mother of all life," Lilith, a destroyer of life. In creating the Lilith shadow role, men are telling a woman that if she is independent, assertive, free, as Lilith was, she'll end up a frigid nymphomaniac childless witch.

It is especially significant that Lilith, the only important negative female role model invented by Jews, was primarily an Exile invention. Why was her creation as a negative role model so important at this particular juncture in history?

Let's look at the unifying theme behind the three "crimes" of the post-rebellion Lilith. She allegedly: kills child-bearing (pregnant and birthing) women; injures newborn babes (boys until the bris, girls until 20 days of age); excites men in their sleep and takes their sperm to manufacture demon children to replace her own. Of all the indeterminate number of qualities a negative role could embody it was precisely these three that were incorporated in Lilith. All three of these embody several crucial male fears: loss of potency and "manhood," loss of a woman's companionship and emotional support, and threat to survival. While all these male fears have been embodied separately in various non-Jewish myths, their coalescence into one Jewish mythical character at this point in history is not hard to understand. The Exile was a stress situation in which Jewish men feared the loss of manhood, the destruction of their morale, and the extinction of the Jewish people.

In patriarchal societies where a man's manhood is defined in whole or part by his ability to father children, the fear that Lilith (woman) can prevent men from having children in one way or another means that she robs them of their manhood. In their powerless condition in Exile, Jewish men needed to prove their maleness to differentiate themselves from women, the group whose condition of ultimate powerlessness they feared being reduced to.

Fathering children also guaranteed survival of the Jewish people, something that was threatened in the Exile and that Jews were anxious about. Another fear was woman's power to withhold herself from man, either by refusing comfort or even her very presence (Lilith actually left Adam). In the stress situation of the Exile, Jewish men may have been especially anxious that women would not fulfill their role of providers of emotional support. All these fears of Jewish men were projected onto woman as if she held the power to make them into reality by refusing to stay in the subservient enabler role.

When the Exile reduced Jews to subservience, it was a discontinuity for Jewish men, a condition they were unfamiliar with, a situation in which they felt they had lost all their bearings — in which the whole order of the universe was turned upside-down.

For Jewish women, like all women, it was not different in kind, only in degree — more stress, more problems, but not a discontinuity: the real ruler was still at home. Perhaps they were therefore better able to cope with the practical realities than were the men.

As the men needed them more and perceived their strength, they may have feared that the women would use their strength in their own self-interest and stop being enablers. It had to be made forcefully clear to the women that their strength was tolerable — even desirable — *as long as it did not connect with power*.

We can ask here, could it be that there was also some rebellion in the women's ranks at this time that also contributed to the men's need to threaten them with a negative role myth? Janeway writes that negative roles often appear in times when there is social change and when power is no longer bound by customary limits. New roles are called for but at the same time, people feel nervous because they do not know what the new role player expects of them. They want to "separate themselves from the troublemaker and hold him at a distance. *The means they find at hand is to call up the negative shadow role*."

Perhaps women did become more assertive at this time because their situation demanded it. Men must have realized that this assertiveness could be harnessed to altruism, thus creating an even better enabler than before. Thus began the role model of the altruistic-assertive woman, personified in Esther, also an Exile creation. Actually it is Esther, not Eve, who is the flip side of Lilith, the nonaltruistic-assertive woman.

Megillat (Scroll of) *Esther*, which tells the story of Purim, is an excellent source for the substantiation of some of the assumptions we have been dealing with here: the

Amulet on this page was used to protect women from Lilith influence (*Book of Raziel*).

threat to Jewish survival in the Exile, and the role of the Jewish woman as an altruistic-assertive enabler.

The *megillah* tells how Jews in Persia were apparently leading a good life but actually lived at the edge of a volcano. When the king, persuaded by his premier that the Jews were bad for his Empire, put his approval on a pogrom, there was nothing the Jews could really do. What saved the Jews? Mostly Esther's action, first in becoming Queen, which necessitated her living apart from her own people and being a closet Jew, all because her cousin, Mordechai, thought it best (altruism, self-sacrifice); and then, taking her life in her hands by asking the king to save her people (assertiveness). Esther's altruistic assertiveness, which is obviously "good for the Jews," is sharply contrasted in the *megillah* with the nonaltruistic assertiveness of her predecessor, Vashti, who lost her crown (some even say her head, too) for refusing to obey the king. The punishment of both Vashti and Lilith states, in effect: Jewish women, be enablers . . . or else.

One final word about Lilith as an Exile creation. The real threat to the Jews, as we know, was not that women would rebel, but the Exile *itself*. For it is the Exile that made Jews powerless and put them at the mercy of the rulers, on the fringes of society and into roles that turned the masses against them. Exile is a threat, but the Exile cultures — or more accurately, the adoption of Exile cultures (assimilation) — is a seductive solution that in most periods was held out by non-Jews as an inducement to fame, fortune and sometimes even life itself. Many Jews were seduced by assimilation, only to find it sterile and unsatisfying.

Lilith is seductive but unsatisfying. She saps a man's "life fluid," a metaphor for strength; she destroys his possibility for achieving immortality. She attacks Jews when they're most vulnerable or unaware. She robs them of their power and of their future. Lilith is thus in some ways a metaphor for the Exile itself.

We have seen how the creation of Lilith as a negative role model served to coalesce the fears of the men and project them onto the woman, thus reflecting a fear of woman's power to refuse to be the enabler; and to warn all women of the fate awaiting a woman who refuses to be an enabler.

Is there anything we can learn from all the negative portrayals of Lilith? Are they of any use to us? Should we reject them outright?

Ahad Ha'am, founder of "spiritual Zionism," once wrote an essay called "Half-Consolation." He asked: how can Jews know if what the non-Jews say about Jewish inferiority isn't really true? Ahad Ha'am cited the blood libel. Look at it, he said. If non-Jews can believe this dangerous nonsense, they're wrong about Jews' "inferiority," too.

Similarly, as we struggle for our liberation, we hear men insult and vilify feminists as man-haters and child-haters, destroyers of the family in particular and Jewish life in general. Is this, we might ask tremblingly, *could* this be true? So it's not at all bad to have in front of us the Lilith story with all its ugly smears. How candid it is about why Lilith is punished! If men could have invented these hateful smears — like non-Jews invented the blood libel — if there is so much hostility toward women inside their addled brains, then there is no need to think there is any truth in the latest pseudo-sociological smears of feminists. Women need not fear that if they become assertive and independent, they will no longer be "women" but monstrosities, as men say Lilith became. Such smears and lies are, of course, something we should expect. Lilith is a role-breaker and, as Janeway points out, role-breakers should be prepared to find themselves "attacked, regarded as unattractive and frightening [and running] into all kinds of hostility."

Knowing all this now we have the choice of how to look at Lilith, or rather, at what aspect of her character to focus on when we look at her. In doing so, we can bear in mind that mythological characters have never remained constant or immutable; they are always changing in response to human need. The character of Lilith changed — but so did that of Elijah — from the fire-eating prophet of First Commonwealth times to the latter-day jolly beggar who wandered from shtetl to shtetl, pack on back. There is nothing in tradition which dictates the acceptance of either the later Elijah or of the earlier Elijah as the "real" Elijah.

Furthermore, Jewish tradition has been very flexible in what it seeks to emphasize in role models. King David is a much-beloved character in Jewish lore. But tradition could easily have emphasized his immoral personal behavior and cavalier political maneuverings instead of his love of God and the Jewish people. Had this been done, David could have become a negative role model of adulterer and Machiavellian politician. Jewish tradition, however, chose to forget and forgive those reprehensible aspects of his character because it did not regard them as intrinsic to his soul.

It is both necessary and within our tradition to use the same approach with Lilith, bearing in mind the aspect of human need as a factor in focusing on specific aspects of a historical or mythological character. What is intrinsic to Lilith, what is the most central aspect of her character is her struggle for independence, her courage in taking risks, her commitment to the equality of woman and man based on their creation as equals by God. It is this Lilith who is faithful to her innermost self, her nature and her principles.

The other aspects of the Lilith character can in no way be considered central to her very essence, because they do not flow out of a commitment to self but are a reaction to an outside event: Adam's refusal to accept her as an equal. Had Adam accepted her equality, these negative traits would be absent; in fact, there would be no war between the sexes at all, a war based on men's unwillingness to accept women's equality.

The traits attributed to Lilith after she lost her struggle for equality are tainted with male bias and fear. Moreover, Lilith's post-revolt "character" cannot be accepted because it

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FRIEDAN AT 55

FROM FEMINISM TO JUDAISM

By Amy Stone

Betty Friedan — matriarch of the women's movement, the woman who founded the National Organization of Women and was its first president, whose term "feminine mystique" is now part of the language, and who grew up with the triple burden of being intelligent, unattractive and Jewish in Peoria, Illinois — is suddenly out in front as a Jew speaking out for Jews.

When Friedan moves, she is not one to move quietly. She was one of the most vocal in her outrage when the International Women's Year conference at Mexico City in the summer of 1975 condemned Zionism as racism, a move she considers both anti-Semitic and anti-woman.

How does Friedan at 55 relate her feminism to Judaism?

I interviewed Friedan just after she had finished her new book and just before her three children were due home on vacation from college and graduate school. Her New York apartment is big, filled with books and Victorian furniture from her past life as exurbanite wife and mother in an 11-room Victorian house.

Sitting at her kitchen table, Friedan explained what had suddenly made her aware of herself as a Jew:

"When Arafat was received at the U.N., that's when I started to get outraged and worried. I've never been a Zionist, but shortly after, I really began to feel there would be a new wave of anti-Semitism. Jews themselves were not protesting. I began wondering why people like me who have never really been associated with Jewish life but are prominent in American life weren't making an outcry like the liberal intellectuals did during the Spanish Civil War.

Photo by Allen Rokach

"A friend of mine said to me, 'I'm a Jew who's married three WASP women. I never felt good about being Jewish. Now I think we all have to rethink things.' We started a Jewish consciousness-raising group with writers, some people from Wall Street, meeting once a month.

"At the same time, my kids started being newly interested in their Jewish roots. I figured it was some profound and strong and good response to affirm your Jewishness in the face of new anti-Semitism. The rally against the U.N. anti-Zionist resolution was the first time I'd spoken on the subject. I think the U.N. is becoming a vehicle for a new wave of persecution of the Jews. I feel very strongly that one has to protest. One can't be an ostrich the way so many of the Jews were in Germany."

Not that Betty Friedan was welcomed back to the fold with open arms — when she took the microphone at the New York rally protesting the U.N. anti-Zionism resolution, she was booed by Orthodox demonstrators. But she is used to winning over hostile males in any audience; she focused on her outrage at the anti-Zionist resolution, and her hecklers accepted the support of this unacceptable feminist.

Friedan's anger at injustice against Blacks, women and Jews comes from her own childhood experiences. Growing up as a Jew in Peoria in the 1930's, Betty Naomi Goldstein was made to feel "marginal," she says. "Ever since I was quite little, I remember my father telling me I had a passion for justice. But I think it was really a passion against injustice which originated from my feelings of the injustice of anti-Semitism."

Her father was an immigrant from "around Kiev somewhere," who got to Peoria at the age of 13, sold collar buttons on street corners, and put his youngest brother through Harvard Law School.

Friedan explains, "By the time I was born, he was a member of the Chamber of Commerce and owned a fancy jewelry store — sort of a Tiffany of the Midwest." But people who associated with him in business would not associate with him elsewhere.

Friedan's mother grew up in Peoria "fairly isolated as a Jew." Eighteen years younger than Friedan's father, she gave up her job as society

page editor of the local paper when she married.

Friedan remembers the warmth of the family seders, going to temple on High Holy Days and being made to go to Sunday school. In what may have been her one religious crisis, she recalls, "I was asked to do the floral offering at confirmation, but shortly before confirmation I discovered that I didn't believe in God. I told the rabbi and he said, 'Keep it to yourself'."

At Smith, where she finally stopped feeling her intelligence was a liability, Friedan was acutely aware of "the phenomenon of the anti-Semitic Jew," which she feels both her mother and she herself suffered from growing up in a city with few Jews. As a freshman at Smith, Friedan lived in a house with four wealthy Jewish girls from Cincinnati. It was just before the outbreak of World War II, and the president of Smith had urged the college to petition Roosevelt to relax the immigration quotas keeping refugees out and had offered to take college-age girls into Smith.

Friedan, speaking in her gravelly voice, recalls, "There was a lot of anti-Semitism in my house and a lot of argument against the resolution. To my amazement, these Jewish girls did not speak up. The resolution didn't pass in my house but it was put on the hall table for signatures. It really horrified me that these four girls did not sign. Many of the WASP girls did, and I and other freshman Jewish girls did, but not these four wealthy girls. They were the type that spoke in whispery voices and became utterly anemic because they did not want to be known as Jews.

"I later became editor of the Smith newspaper and founded a literary magazine. The first short story I wrote was 'The Scapegoat.' It's about anti-Semitic Jews, about a girl that all the other Jewish girls turn against since everyone else was turning against her."

Back in Peoria after she graduated *summa cum laude*, Friedan spoke at her Reform synagogue's Sisterhood. She talked "On Affirming One's Jewishness," on the phenomenon of taking anti-Semitism and turning it against oneself instead of affirming one's own identity. "I think it was strong meat for them," Friedan remembers.

She felt it was very important for her own children "not to grow up marginal but to affirm their own identity." Friedan explains, "I was never religious, but we always had Passover. We would freewheel the service a bit, talking about our ancestors' battle for freedom and what

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Photo by Allen Rokach

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR MEXICO CITY: ONE YEAR LATER

Thoughts from Marcia Friedman, Israeli Feminist and Knesset Member.

Zionism is and has always been a national liberation movement. To identify it with colonialism, imperialism, or racism — as was done in the Mexico City declaration — is not merely slanderous, it is also self-defeating to those who do so.

National liberation movements are, by definition, nationalistic. They are the organized expression of a given group's aspiration to self-determination. Such groups define themselves and therefore set themselves apart from other groups by virtue of common language and/or religion, history, customs, racial characteristics. This, whether we like it or not, is the meaning of nationalism and national liberation movements. Such is Zionism, such is the Palestinian liberation movement, such is the black liberation movement.

The Middle East conflict will never be resolved unless it is understood and dealt with as a conflict of competing national liberation movements. This is true particularly for the parties to the conflict.

Feminism is a liberation movement, too. But we are a movement for human liberation that transcends national, socio-economic, and ethnic boundaries, and perhaps even denies them. The feminist vision is, I think, ultimately a vision of one world. In its early stages it is a *women's* liberation movement, and that is as it should be.

As women, as feminists, we have pressing reasons for denying and condemning the power politics of men and male-dominated governments, and for ignoring the divisions, conflicts, and struggles for dominance that such politics have created.

That an international conference of women which purported to be feminist should engage in such politics is particularly painful. That fact alone shows us that Mexico City was not a feminist conference. It also shows us just how long and difficult a road we still have before us in achieving the realization of feminist goals.

MARJORIE MORNINGSTAR REVISITED

By Elenore Lester

From the movie *Marjorie Morningstar.*

Marjorie Morningstar's daughter is well and living happily in a feminist collective near Boston. She left her husband and three children back in the suburbs two years ago, determined to find herself. Marjorie and her lawyer husband, Milton Schwartz, still live in Mamaroneck — both in a state of shock.

This is the inevitable 1970's sequel to Herman Wouk's best-selling novel of the '50's in which the heroine struggled ineffectually against her fate and then succumbed — to Milton, Marriage and Mamaroneck.

Marjorie was the first Jewish American folk heroine, the foremother of the Jewish American Princess. The novel that bears her name was more popular in the '50's than *Goodbye Columbus* and *Portnoy's Complaint* were in the '60's. In fact, *Marjorie Morningstar* and *Goodbye Columbus* might be viewed as counterparts of one another. Roth denigrates the suburban Jewish culture that Wouk only a few years earlier held up as an ideal, and Wouk mocks the psychiatric culture that was nurturing Roth and his imitators.

But the fact that Wouk chose to center his novel around a woman is significant. Women are readily associated with continuity and in this novel Wouk is essentially concerned with nothing less than Jewish continuity. Marjorie is presented as a true heroine whose decision for a middle class existence is vital to the continuity of the Jewish community. In this novel it is clear that although the Jewish penis carries the mark of the covenant between God and Israel, the Jewish womb is the very house of Israel. Wouk saw that house threatened by paganism and idolatry and *Marjorie Morningstar* represents a book of prophecy within the format of a romantic novel.

It is illuminating to return to *Marjorie Morningstar* at this time because it throws a good deal of cultural history into relief. The narrative is set in the late '30's, a time when Jews were moving out of first-generation immigrant status. Marjorie's father is only a small businessman, a feather

"... Marjorie," Noel's letter said, "I'm tired of playing the horse to your rider and I'm throwing you .....You have ridden me mercilessly. Your left spur has been the American idea of success and your right spur the Jewish idea of respectability. . . ."

importer — in a novel filled with sociological metaphors, this one is a reference to Mr. Morgenstern's lightweight economic status. Nevertheless, the business at which he grubs from a squalid office has enabled the family to emerge out of The Bronx to the splendor of the El Dorado apartments on Central Park West. This move, which broadens Marjorie's social horizons and spurs her to dump her unglamorous boyfriend, gives Mrs. Morgenstern the opportunity to comment shrewdly, "It's a long way from Bronx Park East to Central Park West."

A triumph in a Hunter College play inspires Marjorie to dream of becoming an actress. She decides to change her last name from Morgenstern to Morningstar and this Anglicization of a European name is, in this book, always associated with a rejection of Judaism. Almost immediately afterward, Marjorie begins to dine out with people who eat *treif*. However, she pushes aside the bacon on her own plate in revulsion. The author is showing us that Marjorie's Jewish instincts are profoundly rooted. In her deepest being, Marjorie is gastronomically and genitally dedicated to Judaism.

But Marjorie is drawn to the glitter of the great profane world and when she gets a chance to work at a Catskill hotel, South Wind, slyly spoken of as Sodom, she grabs it. She is hired as an entertainer to work under the brilliant Noel Airman (nee Ehrmann), with whom she instantly falls in love. Noel is one of those talented individuals who somehow always miss the decisive opportunity to bring their abilities to full fruition. Noel is attracted to Marjorie, but he is a committed bohemian and lets her know from the beginning that he will not be hooked. They then proceed to play one of those lengthy courtship games of the pre-Pill era, in which the woman holds out as long as possible and only succumbs to "passion" if there seems no other way to bind the man. In Marjorie's case it doesn't work. The affair continues for a year before Noel flees to Europe, leaving Marjorie a devastating letter.

The novel is divided into two unequal parts. The events leading up to the climactic, or rather, anti-climactic, defloration of Marjorie take about two-thirds of the book. The final third is devoted to showing how Marjorie manages to repair the damage — that is, knit herself together, at least in the spiritual and psychic sense.

Marjorie's recuperation is effected through a trip to Europe in which she meets a man who is only slightly Jewish, but who is engaged in highly dangerous work to rescue German Jews. Marjorie's brief encounter with a true hero enables her to see Noel for the luftmensch or "nothing" the author claims he is. Marjorie is able to reject Noel when, down and out in Paris, he finally proposes.

Soon after returning from Europe, Marjorie meets and falls in love with Milton Schwartz. She feels obliged to tell him about her damaged genital condition and this has an almost fatal effect on the man. However, Milton's love is so great that after a brief nervous breakdown he returns to Marjorie with a big diamond ring. The author tells us:

> He never said anything about Noel, thereafter; not for the rest of their lives. But she never again saw on his face the pure happiness that had shown there during the drive across the George Washington Bridge in the sunset. He loved her. He took her as she was, with her deformity.

Despite the deformity, Marjorie gets a $6,500 wedding with a seven-piece orchestra. Noel attends and his eyes brim — presumably because he now sees what he has lost.

Now a book as popular as *Marjorie Morningstar* must hit a vital nerve in the public's feelings. Indeed, Marjorie's dilemma — whether or not to sleep with a man she loved but who refused to be tied up in the bonds of matrimony — was the dilemma of the period for gentile as well as Jewish young women. Mary McCarthy's *The Group*, which was also set in the mid-'30's and came out in the mid-'50's, shows WASP young women confronting the changing sex customs. Some of them have bad experiences, but in no case does the author appear to regard the young woman's loss of virginity as being of concern to anyone but herself.

How different it is for Jews! Marjorie's defloration is fraught with immense consequences for the Jewish people. At one point in the novel, Marjorie decides to succumb and is on her way to her lover when her beloved Uncle Samson-Aaron, who represents basic Jewish goodness, saves her by managing to get himself drowned in the hotel fountain in the nick of time!

When the defloration finally occurs some years later, it has not only sociological but cosmological implications. As the act takes place, there is an eclipse of the moon! The great orb whose changing face is so closely identified with the changes in women's bodies actually hides in shame! Wouk assures us that Marjorie herself experienced nothing but shock and shame and that she cried a great deal afterward. This, however, didn't discourage her from continuing the affair for a year.

In the metaphorical context of the story Marjorie's lost hymen represents the loss of innocence of East European Jewry in their transplantation from the tiny closed-off *shtetl* to the wide-open democratic Golden Land. The geographic and economic aspects of the move were negotiated by Marjorie's grandparents and parents. But the problem of how to maintain Judaism within the new context, even *why* to maintain it in such a context, was first felt by Marjorie's — that is, Wouk's — generation.

The cement of profound religious conviction and cultural isolation had kept the Jews together in the past. But that cement was eroding in the Golden Land. Wouk had a "solution" that blended perfectly with the universal

" " on these pages are from "Marjorie Morningstar" by Herman Wouk (Doubleday, 1955).

"... The brute fact was that having an affair with a man was a plunge into change, shocking irreversible change, like an amputation. ... The sex had been, in the best moments, shaking, lovely; but even in those best moments it had been darkened by reservations, fear and unconquerable shame."

American dream of the period — retreat to the nuclear family in a reconstituted *shtetl* of split-level homes choking with gadgets: The perfect contemporary reconstruction of the Garden of Eden or *greene felde*. There was only one hitch. It didn't work. That became obvious in the '60's when the supposed chief beneficiaries of this dream, the children, started fleeing like refugees out of a nightmare pogrom.

When the book first appeared, Isaac Rosenfeld, regarded by many as the most brilliant critic of the day, reviewed it in an important essay in *Partisan Review*. He pointed out that Wouk had come out for "God and the suburbs," that is, he had equated middle-class values with Jewish values. Indeed, nowhere in the book does Wouk suggest that Jewish values might involve anything more than Mrs. Morgenstern's maternal pragmatism.

However, what really bothered Rosenfeld was that Wouk had not permitted Marjorie to experience orgasm. Rosenfeld was a zealous Reichian, a fashion of the period shared by Mailer, Bellow and other Jewish rebel writers. As far as Rosenfeld was concerned, Marjorie would have been fulfilled if she had experienced the Reichian Cosmic Orgasm with Noel.

Would she? Today, Rosenfeld's view is as questionable as Wouk's. Both men focused on where Marjorie's sexuality was to go for the benefit of herself and society. Neither saw her as a total human being.

The fact is that the affair between Marjorie and Noel was not one of great passion. Wouk's limitations as a writer would not permit him to depict great passion. But it is noteworthy that in a book filled with cardboard characters, Noel Airman actually comes through with a certain conviction as a man who *will not be harnessed*. And his fascination for Marjorie lies precisely in that fact. She may have told herself that she was really trying to bind Noel to her, but the subterranean vibrations of the book tell us that she didn't so much want to *have* Noel as to *be like him*!

"Oh give me the novel!" cried D. H. Lawrence half a century ago. "Let me hear what the novel says. As for the novelist, he is usually a dribbling liar."

How true! Wouk marries off Marjorie and assures us that she will be happy and Judaism will survive.

But the novel refuses to end with Marjorie's wedding. It insists on an epilogue. An old admirer visits Marjorie 15 years later. She is living well. She and her husband are happy and they have four children. Marjorie is active in the synagogue and she and her husband are "rather strictly observant." Despite her gray hair Marjorie is still attractive — a model suburban matron. Yet the old suitor sighs for the Marjorie of old who has been replaced by a "sweet-natured, placid gray Mama." He recalls that the Marjorie of old wasn't merely pretty — she was radiant! He concludes that he was mistaken — he had projected radiance on her with his "own hungry young desires." Marjorie had really always been "ordinary."

Ordinary? Is the novel really telling us that Marjorie has become a wife, mother and suburban matron because she couldn't do anything better with herself? Despite the novelist's conscious message, the novel makes its own wayward point.

Nevertheless, we the readers supply still another dimension. We know that Marjorie was both ordinary *and* radiant. We know that an "ordinary" young woman can be so filled with appetite for life that she becomes radiant — and she *stays* radiant. Unless something happens to destroy her radiance. The *novel* tells us that a happy marriage to Milton will turn a radiant woman into a suburban zombie by the time she is 40. Can this be good for the Jews?

There was something wrong with the blueprint. Today many place the blame for the diminishment of Jewish life on the collapse of the family. It might be more correct to blame the collapse of the family on the diminishment of Jewish life.

But the purpose of this essay is not to place blame, nor is it to encourage young women to follow the footsteps of Marjorie's daughter into the feminist commune. It is simply to acknowledge the facts and question where do we go from here. The facts tell us that Wouk's formula was a bust. Even if the nuclear family could be held together, even if Marjorie's daughter could be led home and induced to continue her parents' mode of being "rather strictly observant" it would offer no great assurance for the survival of Judaism.

"... Then, all at once, at the very worst moment, just after the food was set before them, the story broke from her in a stammering rush of words; every word like vomit in her mouth. For that was what it amounted to in his eyes and in hers — a deformity; a deformity that could no longer be helped; a permanent crippling, like a crooked arm. ..."

What is to be done? Nobody has yet suggested a satisfactory new structure for contemporary lives. Neither has anyone come up with a satisfactory way to reenergize the spiritual content of Jewish life. But Judaism has survived the profound change in family structure that took place when polygamy outlived its uses. There is no reason to believe that it cannot adapt to the withering away of

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WOMEN'S LIBERATION & JEWISH LAW

By Blu Greenberg

Traditional elements of all communities have tended to favor the status quo regarding women — indeed, to shy away from anything which might rock the ancient boat. The Jewish community has an extra anchor for this attitude; all that has happened in our collective past has been codified into the religious legal system known as *halachah* (Jewish law and way of life), where the human input and the Divine source are mystically fused. The beauty of such a system is an ever-present sense of the Divine calling in all our actions (thus, observing the rules of *kashrut* — dietary laws — is a way of sanctifying our appetites even as we satisfy them). On the other hand, such a system is highly resistant to change, as in matters relating to women.

In many areas central to the life of a Jew, such as prayer and Jewish education, the Jewish woman has been poorly trained and negatively conditioned. Furthermore, in legal areas — such as status in the religious courts and in divorce proceedings — Jewish law, despite its overriding ideals of justice and equality, discriminates in favor of men. If we are to believe that prayer and knowledge are means of establishing a genuine relationship with God and the community, women must be encouraged to fulfill themselves in these roles and not depend on vicarious satisfaction through the males of the community.

Although there has been much improvement through the ages regarding their legal, educational and liturgical status, Jewish women of this generation will have to exert pressure to achieve an upward levelling, for *halachic* change will not come of its own. Thus if woman is to realize her full potential as a Jew, she must aim for nothing less than a blend of personal growth and political action. During the last few years, growing numbers of Jewish women have understood this and have addressed themselves to the fundamental issues of *halachah* and change vis-a-vis women's role.

Before we examine some specifics in the areas of education and prayer, it is important that we understand the underlying philosophical assumptions that enable us to call for change while remaining fully within the *halachic* framework. In a traditional system, one must ask, what is the law? What has been done before us? These questions are important for they contain within them the search for Authority, for Divine sanction, and also a sense of rootedness and of community.

Some would answer that every detail of *halachah* was fleshed out at Sinai, fixed for all time. Yet one must be aware that great changes have taken place in *halachah* as it has grown over the generations. Indeed, by combining a sensitivity to contemporary needs with a passionate desire to remain faithful to the Torah and Revelation, rabbis in every generation succeeded in preserving a love for the tradition, a sense of its continuity and its binding quality even as they responded to new societal conditions.

It is important to emphasize this process because contemporary resistance to change has cloaked itself in a mantle of Biblical authority and rabbinic immutability. That claim simply does not hold up under an analysis of *halachic* development. In the Talmud there is a remarkable honesty about the reasoned analyses of human minds, pressures and counter pressures, majority decisions over miraculous proofs, even disputes between political parties with their vested interests on issues as theological in nature as Temple worship.

The status of women is but one area where tremendous changes have taken place from Biblical to Talmudic to medieval and modern times. For example, a Jewish male in ancient times could divorce his wife simply by driving her out. In Talmudic times, he at least had to show cause; in medieval times, he could not divorce her under most circumstances unless she gave consent. In the area of education, it was at one time forbidden for a man to teach a woman Torah, let alone Talmud. Today, even the most right-wing *yeshivot* approve of teaching women Torah and Mishnah, and many teach Talmud to women.

Certainly the religio-legal system was not frozen at one

period of history, as some today would have us believe, and surely most of these gains were achieved because of human needs and pressures. Rabbinic leaders of today who are waiting for divine sparks to help them overhaul the discriminatory laws regarding the *agunah* (a woman who is not free to remarry because her husband never gave her a divorce or because his death was not proved) are breaching the divine and human trust placed in them.

Let us note here five specific patterns of change that are built into the *halachic* system and are found in abundance in the Talmud and later rabbinic literature:

(1) *Deliberations in the abstract*: Generally, these lead to additions in the area of ritual, reflecting a society which loved the tradition and tried to embellish it by assembling more and more ritual responsibility. Giving women new responsibility in prayer could well fall into this category.

(2) *Hora'at sha'ah* (a law relating to the needs of the times): Historically, such changes involved something which openly violated existing *halachah* but were promulgated because of an emergent and pressing need. Rabbis could use this category today to correct social injustices in divorce and *agunah* situations. Many individual rabbis throughout medieval and modern history have granted an *agunah* a divorce by a rather extraordinary stretching of *halachic* limits because they understood the dire need of the woman. It would take only a little more collective maturity to reformulate the law once and for all as a measure of *hora'at sha'ah*.

(3) *Takkanah* (a new ruling because of a sociological or economic need): Sometimes a *takkanah* was enacted by the consensus of the *Bet Din* (Law Court); sometimes it was the individual action of the main religious authority of the generation. The *ketubah* (marriage contract), for example, was created (sometime during the Second Commonwealth, fifth through first centuries B.C.E.) because of the growing need to protect individual women from an abusive marriage or divorce. Today, too, *takkanot* could be used to grant women participation in the marriage ceremony, to ameliorate their status in divorce law and in the religious courts, and to make prayer a binding *mitzvah* upon women.

(4) *Minhag* (custom): Many a *minhag* was woven into the *halachah* of succeeding generations. During the past few years, some women and men have begun to develop new *minhagim* for women, such as a ceremony welcoming a baby girl into the Covenant. There are many today who do not understand these new *minhagim* as they should be understood, i.e. as a sign of the revitalization of the tradition. Yet these new ceremonies and customs will in time undoubtedly be woven into the system, part of that marvelous Jewish quality of weaving Divine and human together for generations to come.

(5) The last pattern of change might be simply called "disuse." Maimonides describes this process as the basis for annulment decisions of a Bet Din of a later generation which takes into account the fact that previous generations were lax in observing a particular *halachah*. Certainly as one reads through Biblical and rabbinic literature, one becomes aware that there are certain procedures which have simply dropped out of sight, even as new ones developed. To a great extent, we can see this process at work in the area of Jewish education and rabbinic studies for women, where the restrictions that existed for many generations are being ignored or nullified.

Although these patterns should not be applied lightly, it is well to be aware of the power of individuals and of the community to effect changes in *halacha* without endangering the validity of the system as a whole. Indeed, all changes concerning woman should be subsumed within one or another of these categories in order to preserve the fidelity to system and process, and strengthen our awareness of the continuity of tradition as we move ahead.

Beyond these categories, we must also bear in mind that much that pertains to woman in Jewish law is not necessarily religious or theological in origin (i.e., in no way serves the Creator) but stems from sociological, psychological or political roots. Cultures in the past, as today, continually interacted and influenced each other, and women were generally at second level in all cultures. There is not a religious or theological value to women in particular being excluded from a *minyan*, from testimony in the religious courts, from a fair divorce, from rabbinic training programs. My belief in the perfect God does not allow me to think that the Lord would favor one sex over the other in any area of

life. This does not mean that everything must be identical and interchangeable; it does mean that where inequity or abuse exists, it is a result of human imperfection, not God's preference.

It is true that in many cases disabilities are pegged on scriptural statements; I would, however, argue that in many instances, custom or sociology preceded rabbinic enactment. An *asmachta* (support in scriptural text for rabbinic enactment) was found to endow a rabbinic position with authority and the important feeling of being continuous with the tradition, from Revelation onwards. New *asmachtaot* can and must be found to validate new realities.

Learning is crucial in the attempt to effect a change in women's position in Judaism. The role of the individual in Judaism is related to the performance of *mitzvah* (obligation); thus women, who are bound by fewer *mitzvot*, play a lesser role. The status of the individual within the community is related to learning; thus women, who are limited in Jewish learning, have a lesser status. However, in great measure, performance of *mitzvah* is also related to learning. Jewish literature is replete with the theme of "greater is the one who learns for the sake of performance (of *mitzvah*) than one who learns for the sake of learning." This means two things: one, that women must learn in order to know how to perform *mitzvot*; two, is that both role and status are functions of learning.

Women's learning is crucial for a more significant reason. There is something inherent in the Jewish intellectual process that is intensely spiritually and emotionally rewarding, that binds a Jew more closely to the Jewish past and present. It is not simply an intellectual exercise, rather it is a genuine means of encountering God and experiencing a rootedness in the community. Women must be able in ever greater numbers to avail themselves of this rich nurturing process. In the best traditions of our people, women should schedule time for Jewish learning — even a quarter of an hour daily can be fruitful. It is difficult to do this alone, therefore one should form a *hevruta* — set aside a special time with a friend or neighbor or husband to study texts.

As Jewish women begin to study rabbinics, exegesis, history and theology in greater numbers, an educated laity and leadership of Jewish women will emerge and, hopefully, pave the way for eventual acceptance of women as authors of scholarly works, teachers of Talmud and rabbinic literature, judges in the *Bet Din*, rabbis, *poskim* (religious arbiters), and even heads of *yeshivot*. The best way to counter ridicule of this concept is to provide a few models as precedents. And the best way to generate these models is to educate ourselves.

Admittedly, it is very difficult and costly these days to become well-educated. Women must pressure institutes of higher learning to meet their needs. We must duplicate in many places the *kollel* system in which young men by the thousands are able to study *Talmud* intensively, full time, over several years while receiving a stipend to cover living costs. We must learn to approach foundations, federations, and philanthropists in our own communities to underwrite such facilities for women. We must also revamp our elementary education curricula to encourage young girls along these paths early in their lives.

The question of women rabbis is perhaps the most difficult and crucial in woman's striving for equality within Judaism. I must admit that, having been nurtured in the Orthodox community, my initial reactions to the thought of a woman rabbi were negative. I have since come to believe that if a woman wants to serve the Jewish community, to teach and to lead, and has the necessary education and commitment to serve as a model, we should be willing to learn from her. It is learning, diligence, a mastery of the sources and personal piety that qualify one to become a rabbi — not any physical or sexual characteristics. The rabbinate has been an exclusively male domain because only men were welcome in the house of study. The denial of the title "rabbi" to women also closes many other doors to them; many Jewish educational and communal institutions consider for top executive positions only persons with a rabbinical title.

Ordination is currently attainable only in Reform and Reconstructionist seminaries. The (Conservative) Jewish Theological Seminary rejected such a suggestion in 1974 and again in 1976 on grounds that the community was not ready for it. No woman has tried to enter the rabbinic program of Yeshiva University or any other modern Orthodox yeshiva, and such thoughts have not even penetrated the consciousness of the right-wing yeshivot.

Despite this obstacle, the initial process of education of women must begin. Beyond its own satisfaction, rabbinical studies are a fine preparation for the teaching of Jewish studies, an expanding field at secular institutions. Moreover, there is a great likelihood that a growing body of women readied at different levels of training will have a great effect on opinion regarding ordination. Many *halachic* decisions are made *bedayavad* — in full consideration of existing realities. And finally, if all else fails, one can seek out the few sympathetic rabbis (even in the Orthodox community there are some) who, without fanfare, would be willing to ordain a qualified woman in the face of their colleagues' wrath and censure.

Gradually, the model of serious, successful and devoted women rabbis will speak volumes louder than the endless debates on both sides. (Space does not permit a discussion on the issue of marriage and divorce and the religious courts. I would simply note here that rabbinic and *halachic* input from women, particularly women rabbis, would have great effect in removing some of the legal disabilities. Short of that, the same approach used in seeking ordination could be used to pressure for change in these areas. Jewish women should compile and circulate a list of such rabbis sympathetic to their needs. This would reinforce the development of *halachah* in the right direction.)

The second area where change must take place is the realm of worship, both within and outside the synagogue. The 1973 Rabbinical Assembly (Conservative) decision recognizing women as part of a *minyan* (quorum of

worshippers) sparked considerable controversy. But what was striking was the relative absence of discussion about a fundamental question, namely that women are asking for a greater role and responsibility in prayer.

To some extent, the disregard of this central issue can be explained historically and sociologically. Men did not and do not have expectations of women in this area. The woman was relieved of the obligations of prayer, because of her duties at home, and because of the desire to keep her out of the public sector, where organized prayer took place. As she was relieved of *mitzvah*-obligations bound to time, she suffered a loss of *mitzvah*-rights. Even when she grew out of her limited sociological role, began to function outside the home and to have many more years of life not involved in child-raising, the *halachic* tradition served to keep her incomplete and immature vis-a-vis liturgical responsibility.

In truth, the notion of time-bound *mitzvot* recognizes a real situation that many a woman confronts during the early years of caring for babies, when it is often difficult to find a few moments to brush her teeth, let alone free herself for prayer (although there are many mothers of large families who have never skipped the morning prayers in their lives). One can, however, conceive of a *halachah* that would require women to pray daily, yet exempt them during certain periods of their lives, perhaps between the birth of the first child and until the youngest child is 7, or 10, or possibly Bar or Bat Mitzvah and assumes the responsibility of prayer himself or herself. I also suspect that if she developed the habit of prayer many a woman would manage to find time to continue even during her active child-bearing years. Prayer doesn't need holy space to legitimate it, and the truth is that more Jews pray daily in their homes than in shuls.

I have sometimes suspected that if I, as a woman, were not bound to keep Shabbat and *kashrut*, I would do everything in my power to see that my husband and sons were able to fulfill these *mitzvot* – but I personally would feel free to sample non-kosher restaurants, eat hot-dogs at a baseball game, and probably not hesitate to expand my enjoyment of the Sabbath by ignoring certain restrictions. Yet the beauty of the *halachic* system is that it recognizes this inherent inertia in human beings. We do what *mitzvot* are required of us. We do not normally actively seek out additional obligations. I do keep Shabbat and *kashrut* because I am bound by Jewish law. In turn, I cherish and am drawn to these *mitzvot*, and I grow as a Jew in observing them. If we feel that prayer is an important part of the I-Thou relationship, that it is important for the identification of the Jew within the community, then women, too, should be fully obligated in this area. We are not a praying generation to whom prayer comes naturally, and unless we are bound by *halachah*, it is unlikely that inner motivations will bring us to it. What has not been a *mitzvah* for women should now become one; until that time, women should begin to act as if it already were a *mitzvah*.

As these obligations are established, so should concomitant rights be restored. Those women who experience prayer primarily within the context of a community, can do much to prepare for their increased participation in the synagogue, even before individual rabbis learn to "count" women as members of a *minyan*. We must call for classes in prayer – the understanding of the content and the practice of the ritual forms. We should begin to attend a woman's *minyan* – and learn how to organize one; begin to say *kaddish* for a deceased parent; ask – or pressure – for an *aliyah* (being called up to say the blessings before and after the Torah reading); and learn to read the Torah with the correct cantillation.

Women who attend an Orthodox synagogue with a *mechitzhah* (partition between men's and women's sections) have a right and a responsibility to improve the situation in the women's section so they can at least feel part of what is going on. A friend recalled that in his shtetl, his mother and her friends used to shout down from the shul's women's balcony section and not let the service continue until they could hear every word that was said.

The *mechitzah* in and of itself does not discriminate; under proper circumstances, it can generate a sense of equality in the presence of God. However, most *mechitzot* do not have that effect. I have sat behind *mechitzot* where I could see and hear nothing. It would be worthwhile to suggest switching for just one Shabbat – men in the women's section and vice versa. Both would gain new insight into the synagogue service and the experience of prayer! I happen not to be opposed to male bars, women's tea rooms, and the like. The sense of comradeship with the members of one's sex is not a bad thing. But to use the synagogue as a male refuge is blasphemous. Women must educate the community that the synagogue is the house of God for *all* Jews.

And finally, we must develop new roles in liturgy to celebrate Jewishly important events in our lives – which is what Jews have always done. Indeed, one of the most powerful elements in Judaism is that we sanctify every act and every important step in life with a ceremony or ritual – so that it elevates its status from a biological or psychological occurrence to an event celebrated in the presence of God and community. The most creative event in a woman's life is the act of giving birth. Yet it is striking that we have as yet neither ceremony, blessing or ritual to mark this holy event in a religious context.

The assumption that women can finally mature as Jews, as theological beings, as contributors to and molders of Judaism, is an exciting challenge in terms of its potential effect on Jewish destiny. The possibility that a whole new generation of women might grow up with spiritual expectations other than the lazy ones which we fed upon – that image alone should serve to spur change and neutralize contemporary opposition to *halachic* adaptability.

With all these helpful suggestions, we must nevertheless recognize the serious gap that still exists between individual needs and community traditions. Becoming learned and

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MS. LOT

By Muriel Rukeyser

Well, if he treats me like a young girl still,
That father of mine, and here's my sister
And we're still travelling into the hills –
But everyone on the road knows he offered us
To the Strangers when all they wanted was men,
And the cloud of smoke still over the twin cities
And mother a salt lick the animals come to –
Who's going to want me now?
Mother did not even know
She was not to turn around and look.
God spoke to Lot, my father.
She was hard of hearing. He knew that.
I don't believe he told her, anyway.
What kind of father is that, or husband?
He offered us to those men. They didn't want women.
Mother always used to say:
Some normal man will come along and need you.

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THE HIGH PRICE OF "FAILURE"

By Mary Cahn Schwartz

Give her the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her within the gates.

(Proverbs 31:31)

If anyone needs to be convinced of the urgent necessity for re-evaluating our sex roles, let her spend a week at a Jewish family service agency. The following observations stem from the writer's experience over a 7-year period working as a psychiatric social worker in two such agencies in two medium-sized cities.

Women's liberation has tended to ignore the particular group of women that form the clientele of such agencies. I have yet to be at a meeting where there is talk about organizing the lower middle class wives of husbands who have not moved fast enough in the intensely upwardly mobile urban Jewish culture. Yet, many of the women from this group have had their lives profoundly stunted by rigid Jewish notions of male and female roles. The Jewish mother has been seen as pure grotesque; it is about time we see her as victim as well as vampire.

First, a word about the husbands who come to Jewish family service agencies. Most of the men whom I have interviewed over the years see themselves as occupational failures. They are working, but not at jobs that give them the necessary status that the Jewish culture demands that they have. They work as taxi drivers, salesmen, small store owners in stores that are not doing very well, harassed high school teachers who must take a night job to make ends meet, mechanics, factory workers, and so on. (The reason social workers see such people is simple. If they were more "successful," they would have the money to go to a higher status, more expensive kind of mental-health treatment, from analysis, to a week at Esalen.)

These men exhibit a profound sense of failure. They literally sag under the enormous pressures on Jewish males to succeed in this country. Given their culture, they are not mensches, they are schleps and they know it. They have not excelled in some intellectual endeavor, or they are not a success financially. "There goes my son, the doctor," "that's no profession for a nice Jewish boy," are gag lines they have been weaned on, gag lines that give the clear message of the kind of financial and intellectual standards that are expected. The South American machismo is mild compared to the machismo pressure they have received.

This pressure, has, of course, produced some remarkable results. The Jews are the great American success story, and their rise has been phenomenal. I was struck by the fact that almost every husband I worked with had a close relative who was described as having made it in some visibly distinguished way. One constantly heard, for example, of "my brother, the surgeon," or "my nephew who just got into Harvard."

What this does to a man who has not "made it" in the merciless terms of the Jewish culture is obvious. It does not come as much of a surprise, that a man selling shoes while his brother is a famous doctor should be filled with self-contempt. However, the question rarely asked is, what happens to the women under these circumstances?

The wife is operating under two commandments, considerably more crucial than the first ten she was given. The first is that her "success" identity must come primarily from what her husband does. Second, under no circumstances is she to be allowed to be vocationally more successful than her husband.

It is clear that although wives are applauded for standing behind their husbands, they had better not be seen

standing in front of them. Thus a wife needs a successful husband, *simply to have room to maneuver in*.

If no such person is available, the trap begins to close, and it closes in a very specific way. If the culture tells the wife that the normal way of achieving identity is through what her husband does, then his career, or lack of one, must become an all-consuming concern for the wife. As she exists in a culture where enormous success demands are made, this becomes even more paramount.

However — and this is the terrible catch — *the woman cannot achieve this goal for herself*. Her culture tells her that she must work *through her husband* to get her status in the community. Thus, if the husband is "unsuccessful," the wife must do everything to help *him* to do better.

And lo, the famous Jewish woman emerges, the shrew, the bitch, the nag, the schemer. Everything is tried by these women, except the one thing that might take some real pressure off, that is, to find one's own way somewhat apart from the husband. These wives are aware of the kind of angry, nagging people they are turning into. They are frightened, and often filled with self-hate. Anger and disappointment with the husband inevitably follow, for the one avenue sanctioned by society for the wife to walk forward on is being blocked by him. So she nags, suffers and hopes and hopes, more often than not becoming ultimately bitter.

In the last resort, the wife sometimes turns to the only other glory allowed, that is, the reflected glory of the sons. If this turn toward the son and away from the husband is made, the wife's contempt for the husband is often increased. There are few more painful and debilitating emotions to live with than contempt for one's husband, and the wife begins to feel like the monster that she is often portrayed as. No caricature of the Jewish mother can match the actual self-mocking, self-hating descriptions that a social worker hears daily at a Jewish family service agency. (The havoc that this wreaks in the son, as he wins the oedipal battle, is a horrifying, but better known story.)

I was struck by many wives' attempts to make their families intellectual. Since Judaism emphasizes the importance of the mind the book, the "love of reading" in the modern Jewish family is something that is generally felt to give high status. I often heard a wife complain bitterly that her husband never read. She would then follow with an elaborate strategy of how she was trying to make him read more. This involved buying books, joining book clubs, nagging, screaming at him, and so on. The same kinds of strategies were used with the children.

However, when I asked if she liked to read, or was making any effort to read more, more often than not, the answer was no. The crucial fact was that the wife did not feel that my question was relevant. Her activity could not define her family as an intellectual family, only her husband or perhaps her children could do that. Therefore, she felt powerless to define herself and act on her own behalf. Once this sense is taken away, one's real ability for true growth, change and health is severely crippled.

A look at the greatest play written by a 20th-century American Jew is enlightening in this regard. Willie Loman, in *Death of a Salesman*, is a recognizable person to any social worker in a Jewish family agency, although Arthur Miller chooses not to label him as Jewish. Willie is absolutely obsessed by his own failure. He is eager for his sons to make the success that he didn't. He even has the typically successful older brother who haunts him. One has the feeling that Miller conjured Willie out of the guts of his own experience.

Not so with Mrs. Loman. She is all Loving Concern. She is never angry, never ambivalent, never contemptuous, always understanding. She always sides with the husband against the sons. She is maternal strength, the female rock. She sits there, sewing her torn stockings, offering comfort. And as she does so, she is driving Willie closer and closer to suicide. I do not think that Miller meant to make that point. I think he was much more interested in a more general statement about false American standards, than with female and male roles. But Miller was perceptive enough to have Willie tortured by his wife's life-long suffering.

Linda Loman is portrayed as a totally sympathetic romanticized figure. One has the feeling of a Jewish boy writing his fantasy of what a good gentile wife should be. One could not find two more different wives, for example, than Mrs. Loman, and Mrs. Portnoy. These two women came from the pens of two of our finest Jewish writers, and it comes as no surprise that the bad wife is Jewish, the good wife, gentile.

Miller never suggests that Linda play an alternative role, as he suggests for Willie. The play is rightly entitled *Death of a Salesman*, not *The Life of a Salesman's Wife*. Miller has Linda suggest that if Willie had done something else — grow things in the earth, for example — he might have been a happier man. But Miller never suggests that if Linda had not been such a giving, long-suffering wife, had not lived entirely for and through her husband, she might have been happier and Willie might not have had to commit suicide.

The second commandment our Jewish wife lives by, "Thou shalt not be more successful than thy husband," is obeyed by many women by doing volunteer work. In a culture in which "you get what you pay for," the unpaid wife can feel that she is not a real threat to her husband.

However, many of the women I have interviewed feel excluded from this kind of activity because even the volunteer position is dependent on the status of the husband. The facts of Jewish life are that if one's husband has little status or power to give, the wife often feels unwanted on the Board, the Sisterhood, etc., and tends to stay home. Her resentment is aimed at her husband who is unable to give her the entree, rather than at the system that tells her that her ticket of admission to the voluntary activity can only come from him.

A possible second route the wife can take is to go and get a paying job. Often wives have little education that prepares them to do anything but boring and low-paid work. Despite or perhaps because of the frequent real financial

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AMERICAN JEWISH MEN: FEAR OF FEMINISM

By Bob Lamm

I want to speak of an important choice which faces American Jewish men in responding to the feminist movement and to Jewish feminism in particular. Some things that I write may seem applicable to all men in our relationships with all women. Some may seem specifically relevant to Jewish men and Jewish women. I intend this brief article not as a definitive statement, but as a small part of an ongoing dialogue.

I am a 28-year-old Jewish man. I received my Jewish education in an assimilated, upper middle class Reform synagogue in Westchester County. Like my Jewish male friends, like all Jewish men, I was brought up, educated, and socialized to oppress women.

Of course, no one ever told me so directly. No, the messages of patriarchal society were so unchallenged and so implicit that there was no need for anyone to spell them out. Male dominance was a reality that "everybody" accepted – or so it seemed. Within secular institutions, men were considered important, women unimportant. Within the Jewish community, Jewish men were considered important, Jewish women unimportant (or, at best, important *in their place*, like any good servant).

To cite only one of many examples from my own life, I was named one of eight feature editors on my high school newspaper. The other seven were Jewish women, and we officially began as equals with the same title and prestige. But, in a short time, I had assumed total control of the feature page. I wrote most of the editorials, and assigned others as I chose. I monopolized the layout process (which I enjoyed), and delegated responsibility for copy editing and proof reading (which bored me). I wrote a regular column and generally placed it in the best position on the page. Most dramatically, I managed to purge a number of women editors who did not shape up to my personal standards of competence (or was it *obedience*?).

All of my Jewish male friends had similar patterns of "growth" and "maturity." One ran the temple youth group, one ran the Y.M.-Y.W.H.A. youth group, one ran the National Honor Society chapter, one ran the Senior Activities Board, two ran the sports page of the newspaper, and others ran the Key Club.

Each of us had his own little fiefdom. Each of us dominated a prestigious institution and had "his" women under his control. Each of us was learning important lessons about male supremacy, especially as it affected Jewish women and Jewish men. And the Jewish adults around us were giving unspoken blessing to these arrangements, since they duplicated nicely the male dominance of all Jewish and Christian organizations in our city. We "nice Jewish boys" were preserving a long cultural heritage of subjugating women, while at the same time we were being assimilated into WASP mores about how to "make it" as American men.

It's been a long time since high school. In recent years, exposure to the writings and teachings of the women's movement has forced me to re-examine my socialization as a man, as an oppressor of women. I've gained a different perspective on the power struggles between Jewish women and Jewish men – a perspective which may help explain why Jewish men have such resistance to feminism.

Jewish women have traditionally faced a unique and most demanding double oppression: as Jews within a hostile, anti-Jewish world, and as women within a co-optive and hostile patriarchal Jewish culture. I believe that all women have had to develop incredible strengths in order to survive their oppression.

In the case of Jewish women, a distinct tradition of strength, courage, and independence has emerged. We can see these qualities among many Jewish women whose life situations varied greatly – among Jewish women who struggled to preserve their families in the face of anti-Semitism; among Jewish women who fought to build careers as writers, artists, physicians, and the like; and among Jewish women who became outspoken political activists, such as Emma Goldman and Ethel Rosenberg.

I believe that most Jewish men are at least aware of this tradition among Jewish women. Awareness can lead to a number of responses. Jewish men could understand the current upsurge of Jewish feminism in the light of this herstory, and could struggle to understand and accept what Jewish women are telling us despite all of our fears. Unfortunately, there are other, more popular choices for Jewish men.

All Jews are familiar – much too familiar – with the woman-hating, Jew-hating stereotypes of the "Jewish mother" and the "Jewish American Princess." When Jewish men perpetuate these vicious caricatures, it is in response to the strength, courage, and independence of Jewish women. The mature, forceful Jewish mother and the young, assertive Jewish woman are frightening figures for many Jewish men. Each represents a Jewish woman who will not quietly and sweetly submit to her "natural" "feminine" role. This leads Jewish men to brand Jewish mothers as "castrating" and young Jewish women as "bitchy."

These epithets are crucial weapons in the arsenal of male supremacy. Whenever a man calls a woman castrating or bitchy, it is because somewhere, somehow, intentionally or not, she has threatened his power and dominance. He is telling her to shut up and stay in her place – *or else*. This is the message behind these vile lies about Jewish women which too many Jewish men are eager to spread. The independent, self-reliant, assertive Jewish woman (and, of course, the Jewish feminist) strikes terror in the hearts of every Jewish man, on some obvious or well-hidden level.

This backlash among Jewish men must be understood in terms of the long-standing traditions of Jewish patriarchy: the relegation of women to wife and mother roles, the refusal to let women count in a minyan (quorum of worshippers), the denial of educational opportunities for women, and so forth.

But Jewish men's backlash must also be examined in the context of American definitions of "masculinity" and sexual politics. While Jewish men commonly fear the independence of Jewish women when it appears at home or in private, Jewish men are particularly embarrassed and resentful when Jewish women act forcefully in public situations. The key to these responses is the desire of Jewish men (and the pressure on Jewish men) to assimilate and to succeed in the eyes and the world of Christian men.

Jewish men in America – like men from other minority groups – have grown up feeling "deprived" of an opportunity to attain what is culturally defined as full manhood. Jewish men have envied the unquestioned patriarchal rights and male privileges held by white Christian men, and have felt disqualified from achieving this status because of Jewish identity. In short, Jewish men have wondered: why can't I be treated just like any other *man*?

The most important definitions of masculinity in America still come from white Christian men – Jack Kennedy and Sean Connery in my adolescence, Joe Namath and Robert Redford today. In this climate, Jewish men feel uncertain of our "masculinity." No matter what a Jewish man does – whether he graduates from Harvard, amasses a fortune, gains public office, dazzles as a movie star, excels in professional sports, or impresses (oppresses) numerous women – he can still never attain the WASP looks and cool of a Robert Redford.

Of course, Jewish men could reject the whole masculinity-proving game. We could recognize how inherently repressive, alienating, and woman-hating it is. We could attempt to work our way out of our various male power trips, and forget about demonstrating our "manhood" in white Christian terms or in any terms. But most Jewish men want full patriarchal rights, want publicly certifiable "masculinity," and want to be equal in status and power with Christian men.

To achieve these goals, Jewish men attempt to be "real men" by showing that we have "our" women under control. We try desperately to prove to Christian men that we can keep women in line just as casually and gracefully as the Redfords and the Kennedys. For only then will Christian men respect us; only then will they consider us for equal membership in a patriarchal society.

Thus, the strength, courage, and independence of Jewish women become a particular threat to Jewish men. And Jewish feminism, as an organized political movement challenging our dominance, is even more frightening to us. If Jewish women appear "uppity" in the eyes of Christian men, then Jewish men will be viewed as weak and unable to rule our own culture. Furthermore, Jewish women's independence might lead to direct competition with Jewish men for jobs, income, status, and power. This could easily undermine our upper hand as providers for Jewish women and children. Both on the levels of appearance and reality, Jewish women's advances endanger Jewish men's "making it" within a male-dominated Christian society.

I believe that Jewish feminism faces Jewish men with a very simple but critical choice. We can continue to blame all of our problems on Jewish women, whom we have power over, whom we oppress. We can continue to curry favor with and emulate the Christian men who are slightly higher than us on the ladder of power and privilege. Or we can finally acknowledge the reality of male supremacy within all of American life and American Jewish life. We can dispense with our jokes and threats and stereotypes and begin to treat sexism as a serious matter. We can commit ourselves to learning from the feminist movement and the Jewish feminist movement.

If we are to act responsibly in changing our sexist attitudes and behavior, we must begin by making a diligent attempt to listen to women. This means closing our mouths and opening our minds. It means struggling to understand women's oppression, rather than showing off our argumentative skills. It means reading the important literature that comes to us from women writers, from feminists, from Jewish feminists. It means admitting that when a woman's feminism angers or threatens us, it is exactly

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THE WEDDING

By Diane Levenberg

Never attend a wedding without
an escort no matter
who he is or what he's
really like just
make certain he is
wearing a jacket and slacks
and a clean shirt and an
appropriate tie. Dress him
yourself if you have to re
membering first to throw him
in the shower and to dash him
with English Leather so that he
smells good enough to
take anywhere.

Be there on time and
hold hands and smile at
each other content enough to
have with you a man who
stands on his own two feet just
like the man going down the aisle.
At the table of strangers you
need not speak to anyone you
have him to turn to and damn it
he smells great and that night if

you want to you may say good
night or have him stay till morning.

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A Woman's Wrath

By Yitzhak Leib Peretz

Translated for LILITH By Zora Zagrabelna

The small hut is as dingy as the poverty within. Its four walls weep. From the cracked ceiling hangs an orphaned chandelier stub, the remnant of a no-longer existing light.

The large peeled stove is bound around its belly with a heavy stocking, and leans to one side as if to look at its darkened neighbor, the empty black hearth on which lies an overturned pot with a burnt bottom. To one side there is, may it rest in peace, a broken spoon. This tin hero had an honorable death — fallen in battle with a crusty, stubborn leftover kasha.

There is in the cluttered hut a canopied bed with covers so tattered that its holes look like red feathered eyes. Picture the bedding — no sheets or pillow cases, only the tattered covers and quilt. Nearby stands a cradle, out of which shines the little yellow head of a sleeping infant. In another corner stands a trunk with edges and corners hammered of tin. Once, the trunk had been locked, but now, the padlock hangs loose — obviously no great treasures inside! Then there is a table and three chairs. This wooden furniture had once been painted red, now it is a mottled brown. Add to all of this: a sideboard, a wash stand, a barrel of water and a bucket with a small shovel. Now you can understand that a pin couldn't fit into these four-by-four premises. Nevertheless, there are in here two beings — a "he"; and a "she" — a woman in her middle years, sitting on the trunk which stands between the bed and the cradle.

To her right is the only little green-shaded window, to her left, the wooden table. As she knits a sock, she rocks the cradle and listens. He sits at the table, studying and chanting in a weeping, echo-like voice. He appears uneasy as he pores over his book — he is detached and obviously nervous. He reads aloud as he studies. Some words he swallows, some he draws out in emphasis, some he hurries over, and some passages he skips altogether. Some are accented in staccato, yet expressed with love and reverence. Other passages pour forth like peas from a sack.

Throughout this whole episode he isn't still for an instant. Now he plucks a once-red handkerchief. He wipes his nose in it — then mops his face with it. When he has wiped his forehead, he drops the handkerchief onto his lap; then he takes to twisting his *payis* (sidelocks of hair), plucking jerkily at his graying pointed beard. Now he tucks a plucked hair between pages of the book as he starts to slap his knee. He discovers the handkerchief he had dropped into his lap. He snatches it up, thrusting a corner of it between his teeth. He proceeds to cross his legs in rapid succession — left over right and right over left.

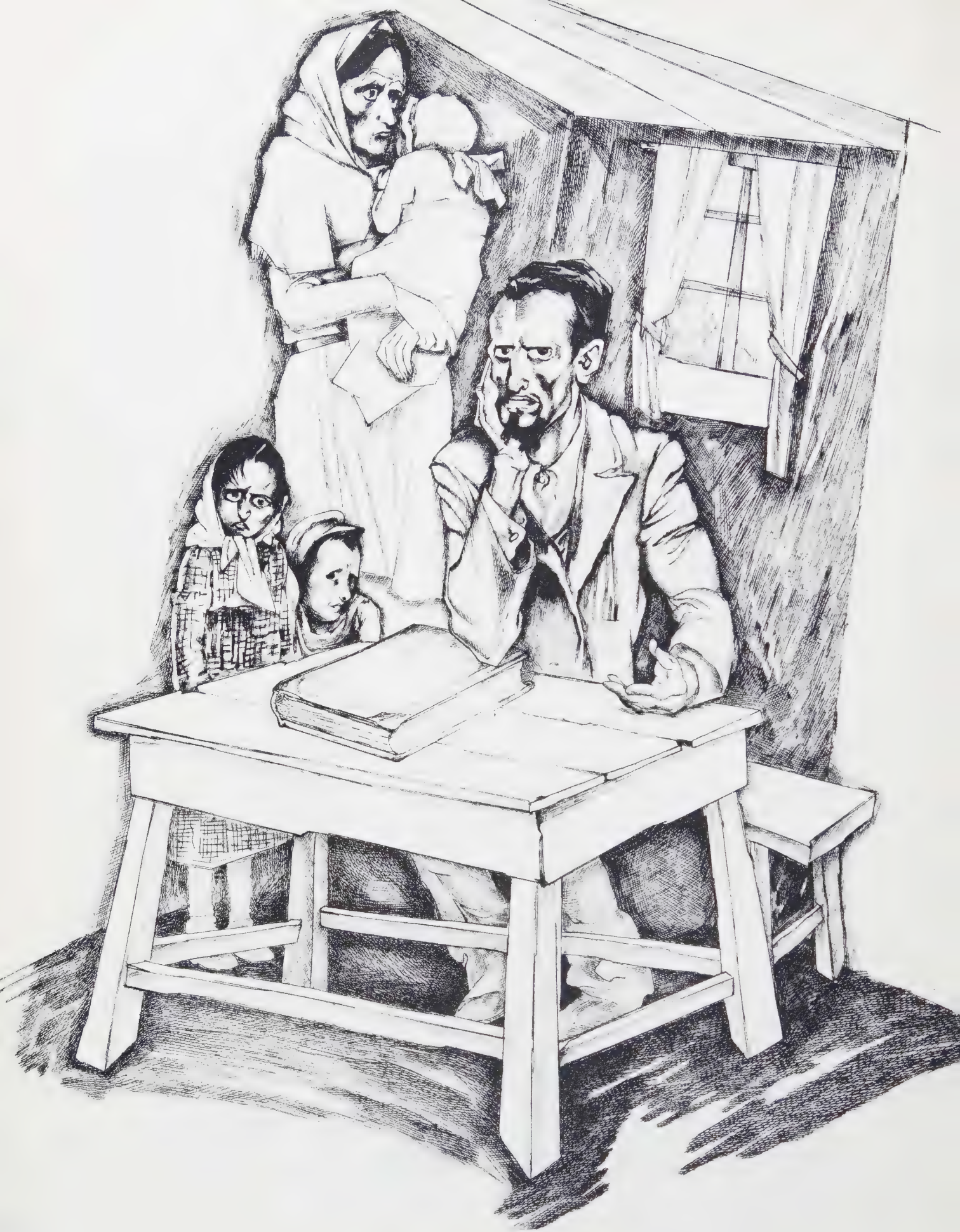
His pale forehead wrinkles constantly, vertically and horizontally; above the bridge of his nose there is now a letter "T". The brows are elongated and the wrinkles deep; layers conceal the skin on his forehead. Now and then he appears to have piercing chest pains. So, with a firm right fist to the left side of his chest, he pounds out an *"Al Chet"* (Confession). He tosses his head to the left, presses his left nostril and through his right nostril there is a jet spray.

Reversing the sides, he repeats the earlier process and this time the left nostril releases the jet. Interrupting this activity, he sniffs a pinch of snuff. He continues in this manner as his body rocks back and forth in fervent prayer. His voice rings, his chair creaks and the table trembles with his activity.

The child doesn't awaken. It is accustomed to the music. And she, shrunken, though still in her early middle years, indulges herself in the *"nachas"* of his renditions, not taking her eyes off her husband, sighing and listening intently for fear a single utterance might be lost. She releases a sigh, thinking, "If only he were as adept at making their way in this world as in his 'other' world, her life here might be bright and sunny. . . ."

As she listens to her inner voice reciting the words, her lined face twitches — her nerves are taut. These thoughts have poured into her being a wild pleasure of anticipation. Imagine the *nachas* she enjoys from her husband's Torah learning! Suddenly she is reminded — "This is already Thursday and there's hardly a kopek to prepare for the Sabbath." And the heavenly light which shone on her face becomes less and less bright — her smile fades and, as she looks out at the setting sun she realizes the day is drawing to a close and that there isn't even a spoonful of warm water in the hut. So a dark shadow is on her face now as she glances at the infant starting to stir. In a moment the ailing child will be awake — and there's not a drop of milk. Desperation has changed the shadow on her face to a black cloud and her knitting needles begin to tremble. She is remembering that, besides all of this, Pesach is almost upon them and her gold earrings and the Sabbath candlesticks are already pawned, the empty chest and chandelier sold! Now the knitting needles are doing a death dance. The clouds which veiled her face earlier have now turned an eerie blue, almost like ammunition for her gray little eyes become weapons. . . .

He is still poring over his books in study, not noticing the atmosphere's becoming more and more tense, not noticing that she has abandoned the sock she was knitting and is now cracking her spindly knotted finger knuckles, furrowing her brow in agony. One eye is already half shut while the other is plunging dagger thrusts at him . . . her husband . . . the scholar. If he could only see all this as she



does, he, too, would suffer chills in every fiber of his being. But he doesn't see . . . nor does he see the trembling of her bluing lips . . . her quivering chin . . . her teeth chattering and how desperately she is trying to arrest an outburst. Anything could trigger off the deafening thunderbolt.

He studies and says aloud, "Listen . . . onto this word the embittered heart clings" . . . and this is the spark which ignites the gunpowder.

Her iron will is being tried to the limit. One unfortunate word opens all the bolted gates, and loosens all the hinges. She is beside herself and springs to her feet. She is frothing at the mouth in a rage and her finger nails are imbedded in her cheeks.

"Oi! a curse should overcome you! Dear God!" She calls out in an angry hoarse voice. "A curse! Dear God!" she repeats and again screams in desperation. "Pesach is coming, it's Thursday and the little one is sick – not a drop of milk in the house . . . Ah! Pesach!" She is breathless. Her hollow chest is heaving, and angry lightning flashes blind her eyes.

He remains transfixed, pale with fright. He leaps from his chair; breathless, he moves in the direction of the door. They stand facing each other – he, staring, glassy-eyed with fear – she, eyes burning in anger. He realizes she has no control, not in her tongue nor in her hands. His eyes squint and he thrusts the handkerchief end into his mouth. Moving away slightly, he breathes deeply and murmurs, "Listen, woman, do you know what it means not to allow your husband to study? eh? not to be a believer? . . . Foolish woman, evil woman, not to allow your husband to study. For this you may burn in hell."

She doesn't reply; this gives him added strength and as she grows paler and paler, his voice takes on greater emphasis.

"Hell-fire . . . to hang by the tongue . . . four deaths at the time of judgment!"

She is very still and her face is now chalk-white.

Instinctively, he feels how unjust he is, that he is punishing her, that he is dishonest. Nevertheless, he is unable to contain his anger. It seems that all the hurtful things he has kept inside himself until now pour forth:

"Do you know the translation of *skilleh*?" His voice booms at her like thunder. "*Skilleh* – it means to be thrust into a grave and covered with rocks. Fire! burning . . . that's what it means – to pour into the intestines a spoonful of boiling hot lead! The battle to the finish . . . that's what it means . . . to decapitate with a sword – like this" – he gestures choking by encircling his neck. "Understand? All for neglecting the Torah."

Now his heart aches with pity for his victim, but this is the first time that he has been so brave – and he is intoxicated. . . . He had never realized before how easily she could be frightened. He stops short, thinking she might come to her senses and grab the broomstick. He springs to the table, closes his book and, as he rushes out he announces (in a softer voice than he had been using), "I'm going to shul," and shuts the door firmly behind him.

The raised voices plus the banging of the door have awakened the small child. It raises its head slowly; the waxened face contorts as it starts to cry, causing a spray to gush from the little swollen nostrils. She remains standing – now she is beside herself – almost a stone figure hardly hearing the child's voice.

"Hah!" She utters such a hoarse sound from a wheezing chest. "Not this world, not the next world. Hanging, he says, choking – hot tar – lead, he says, for neglect of the Torah!

"So – nothing – for me – nothing."

There's a pounding in her torn heart. Here there is hunger – not a dress, no candles to bless, nothing. The child is hungry and not a drop of milk. "Hanging by the tongue for neglect, he says. Hanging? Ha ha ha!" Puzzled, she laughs hysterically and in a rasping voice repeats, "Hanging? Yes, yes, but here, now, the same way. Why wait?"

The child cries out loudly. She doesn't hear it.

"A rope! a rope!" She searches in every corner for a rope. "Where does one find a rope? May he never find my remains here. Let me be rid of this purgatory. Let him know and feel it all. Let him be a mother. I'll sacrifice myself – an angel of death – and let there be an end . . . a rope!"

Her voice calls out in despair, as one cries out for help in a fire. She remembers she had seen a rope somewhere. Yes! under the stove. It has been stowed there to retie the stove for the winter; it must still be there. She rushes over to reach for the rope. What joy! She found it, the treasure. She glances up at the ceiling. The chandelier stub is there; she must get up on the table. She jumps up and as she glances down from the table height she realizes that the frightened ailing child is sitting up, leaning out of the cradle and is trying to get out – about to tumble out.

"Mama," the child cries out weakly. Now a new anger overcomes her. She throws the rope down – jumps off the table – rushes to the child – pushes its head back on the pillow, crying out, "Bastard! You won't even let me hang myself – not even hang myself in peace! It wants to suck again – to suck at the breast. Poison! You'll suck poison!

"All right, glutton, all right," she cries out as she presses her breast into the child's mouth. "Suck – suck and bite."

Zora Zagrabelna has appeared in Yiddish and English theatre and on Yiddish radio programs in Winnipeg, Canada, and is a translator of plays and fiction into both languages

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I. L. Peretz (1852-1915) was one of the founders of modern Yiddish and Hebrew literature. He lived in Russia during a period of great suffering and upheaval, and his writings show both his love for his people and his socialist leanings. Peretz wrote of the life of the Jews of the Czarist "prisonhouse of nations" with bitter realism, and was especially sympathetic to the plight of women. A Woman's Wrath *describes the plight of the poor Jewish woman without any of the later mystification and sentimentality about "the wonderful life in the shtetl" that characterizes writings of those who never lived or suffered there.*

BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE SHMATTES

By Doris B. Gold

It's a truism that Jewish women believe in "organizations." For those over 35, it's a way of life, particularly outside the large urban centers. Over a million and a half of us belong to something (aside from our multi-memberships in general American organizations), at a rate of 45% compared with 30% for all American women. (See chart page 32.)

Yet no more than a passing glance is given Jewish women and their organizations in any work about American Jews. No course on Jewish women's organizations or their history is offered at any of our institutions of learning. We are so other-oriented that we seldom dare to take a look at how *we* are working and where *we* are heading in the 1980's, but such a look is necessary.

Is it "bad" to belong to such a high degree? While "belonging" reveals our dislike of individuation, if we can approve of it our organizations function to increase our personal growth, our communal efficiency, our Jewish vitality as a shrinking minority. But ought we not to begin to take a look at what we do in our organizations – their structure and functions, to see if they are suitable for our needs today?

Some questions: Have we exchanged the traditional women-behind-the-synagog* curtain for a communal curtain, keeping our separate-but-equal organization status-quo?

Are we obsessed with *raising* money instead of *giving* or *making* money?

Do we look to "the men" to organize (exploit) us? Do our husbands exercise undue social control over us in their insistence on pedestalizing us – to make up, perhaps, for the historic "burdening" of the Jewish woman, once confined to the domestic and economic realities of home and family while men held synagog discourse? Have we basked in that psychic satisfaction of queenly dominance in family life while submitting to the codes of Establishment *balabatim* (male big givers/leaders) that we stay in the background – where we are "needed"?

Are we – the great reconcilers, the great peacemakers – suffering from traditional Jewish "modesty" – afraid that it's "not nice" to criticize the men or demand full partnership in decision-making?

Are we using the rationale of "belonging" to prop up duplicating Jewish Establishment structures that were founded to "take care of our own," when we are in an era of federal funding of minority social services?

Are we really a sisterhood with other American women?

As with most voluntary behavior, joining a Jewish women's organization has less to do with the activities offered than with other reasons: affirmation of Jewish social status and wealth, especially since we are relatively new to suburbia where most of us now live; the consequent need for instant Jewish identity without religiosity (often our organizations are a substitute for religious identification in the older mode *e.g.*, as the "auxiliary" in the synagog); visibility of our life-style; and especially, the strong need we seem to have for group-think and taste-exchange: we obviously feel safer that way.

Additionally, the well-known guilt feeling of Jewish women resulting from admonitions to be "Jewish" by worried (male) rabbis and leaders, may be causing a virtual obsession with identity. At the least, the Jewish woman reasons, when she joins a Jewish women's organization, she has "stood up to be counted."

Louis Berman, in his insightful book *Jews and Intermarriage*, speculated that "the Jewish ethos" (our dominant characteristic as expressed in our customs) encourages traits which advantage the Jewish male in our society over the Jewish female, resulting in the woman's "unequal aptitude for participation in gentile society."

This "unequal aptitude" may be sending us back to our surrogate parents, the Jewish women's organization. There the paternalism of the men under whose guidance we

function (with the exception of the "independents"; *see chart*) is familiar. The women's division is our mothering presence.

The Jewish "leadership," of course, has traditionally encouraged our togetherness in an enclave because it leads to maintaining the role differentiation we have always had in the family, particularly the division of labor we have agreed to. Most women's divisions were initiated by the men as a way of having their wives replicate in the community the family power structure.

Unadulterated recognition by Jewish leaders of the massive contribution by women's organizations, reaching beyond the Jewish home to "housekeep" the Jewish community, is hard to come by, however. In its stead is the suspicion that our efficacy and longevity outstrips that of more "powerful" men's groups.

Aside from the obvious primary attention given Israel, its institutions, problems of diplomacy, Soviet Jewry, the UN, there is hardly a domestic issue that Jewish women's organizations haven't confronted. The smorgasbord is huge, from domestic issues like child care and juvenile justice to school integration and the Jewish single parent – all "up to date" sensors from membership are considered.

Some of this activity is unnecessary. A few years back, under Nixon, the National Council of Jewish Women financed a year-long study of the need for child care in the U.S., at the same time that the Administration did likewise. Recently, the NCJW sponsored its "Justice for Children" project during a period of judicial and legal ferment concerning this issue. It is well to study and learn, but it seems clear that Jewish women's organizations often duplicate the efforts of public agencies. Later they ritualize and structuralize these efforts, when they should instead become activists or, at a minimum, create coalitions with other Jewish women and non-Jewish pressure groups to effect change.

The rampant "me-too-ism" of competing women's groups involved in similar activities is a strategy for getting and keeping membership dollars and widening an organization's influence – all justified with hair-splitting "differences." Considering the "division of labor" within Jewish life – tasks assigned men and women, and also the supposed variables of the many women's organizations – such an oversupply is possible where the goal is only "membership" and self-perpetuation, not effective actions.

Overriding all programs for most organizations and, in fact, their *raison d'etre* is the need for getting and giving money to U.J.A., Federations, specific Israel projects and so on. It's a troubling realization, this emphasis on money-getting schemes – different from earning it or giving of one's own wealth. The elevation of the big giver to a position of leadership since World War II, the creation of a Jewish "aristocracy" in our scattered communities, is responsible for this fixation.

Too much fund-raising, almost a Jewish female reflex, time-killing and trivializing, strengthens our historical image – to be bustling but unlearned Jewish women – getting and begetting *things*, while we wish to be known as "educated" and "affluent" as a "Jewish people."

Techniques ranging from local rummage and pre-Christmas bazaars of synagog groups, and antique and arts auctions, to forums and tennis events, hotel and country-club catering – donor credit and quotes – the money mill grinds.

Consider the vulgarities of our seasonal bazaars featuring *shmates* and "new merchandise" being sold to maintain the synagog – conveniently attracting non-Jews at their holiday times. The materialism in American life is thus symbolized and hardly upholds "Jewish values." It also confuses our youth seeking new pride in the humanistic and spiritual goals of Judaism. Isn't it time we women refused to run merchandise circuses using our hard unpaid labor?

Too much of the work of women's groups involves manipulation by our brother and father figures, the rabbis and male Jewish "professionals" who need to control us – especially to increase income for the Jewish Establishment. Their clever sophistry in blending the techniques of fund-raising with no less than "total Jewish education," which they call "leadership development," is something to behold. "So this is *tzedekah*?" we cry. . . . "And welcome to it!" is their smiling response . . .

So often Jewish women's organizations look to Jewish men for advice, leadership, comfort: the concept of the father, exemplified by the rabbi, who vests authority in the husband as the head, the "idea" man, has done its work, again reinforcing Jewish women's self-concept as doers, not thinkers. (Does this account for our lack of passion as a factor in our sexual relationships with our husbands and the friendly companion role we play – responsive, kindly, a shallow antagonist?)

We seem to need male approval even for the right to dissent. In 1972-1973, I counted five occasions on Long Island alone when Jewish women's organizations held programs on what they called "women's lib," each one addressed by a male professor of sociology or history, or by a rabbi.

How can we explain the commitment to "separate but equal" by Jewish women's organizations? Time was when spurious points like the need for daytime vs. nighttime meetings (with women at home and men at work) were offered to explain the separate divisions. The reasoning is more sophisticated now and the issue has been effectively buried. One male fund-raising leader told me: "You can't apply the separate/unequal tag so glibly in Jewish life. We are really different. In many ways, men think of the women's divisions as a privileged sanctuary (*sic*) and you won't find many women who consider it discriminatory."

Of course, one need only note that Jewish men fear their wives will stray into sexual adventures if too much opportunity is afforded them to mingle freely "in partnership" with other men. Unstated is the sense that the

DID YOUR ORGANIZATION SUPPORT THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT??

YES	CLAIMED U.S. MEMBERSHIP		NO STAND
B'NAI BRITH WOMEN	150,000	65,000	BRANDEIS NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN	100,000	350,000	HADASSAH
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TEMPLE SISTERHOODS	110,000	50,000	MIZRACHI WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA
WOMEN'S AMERICAN ORT	115,000	50,000	PIONEER WOMEN
WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM	200,000	35,000 approx	WOMEN'S BRANCH OF THE UNION OF ORTHODOX CONGREGATIONS

women's division is a convenient corner for Jewish women.

In organizations which have considered combining men's and women's chapters, many women opted for the retention of the separate women's chapters because they felt inhibited at meetings with male members. Their feeling of being intellectually inferior was often privately expressed. Many women in combined chapters urge their husbands to speak for them.

Furthermore, women leaders know that if they forfeit the "separate" status, they will lose the opportunity to climb to the top leadership, for men rise first when organizations have both male and female members. The fund-raisers, of course, know that women's partnership with men means smaller giving.

The cold-blooded executive-suite style acquired by otherwise caring Jewish women when they fixate their roles as "organization women" is unpleasant to experience. Jewish women who work as volunteers for organizations often have no employment experience. However, more than non-Jewish women, the unanimous, no-dissent style of their organizations demands "togetherness" from employees. The volunteers become a middle-management cadre, unschooled in human relations techniques. Women's organization leaders must also begin to care about the position of Jewish working women in their midst, and to explore the conflicts between professional staff and volunteers.

Jewish women must also become more individually aggressive and force Jewish women's organizations to champion the right of Jewishly-educated women to work on every level and in every sphere of the large Jewish Establishment. It is appalling not to find statements by Jewish women's groups on or investigations into the subtle and overt exclusion of able Jewish women from paid positions of importance. Except for the women's organizations, there are only two female executive directors of national Jewish organizations (Naomi Levine of the American Jewish Congress and Rachel Jacobs of Americans for Progressive Israel).

The necessity of providing Jewish Establishment jobs for our Jewishly-educated men, including rabbis, has resulted in organizational ineptness and inefficiency and in their dread of competition from intelligent Jewish women. The profusion of politically conservative neo-Orthodox males in Jewish life, makes them unlikely contemporaries for a liberal view of the Jewish workplace and the needs of Jewish women. These Jewish male executives frequently opt for non-Jewish employees and blacks to make their "liberalism" apparent while excluding Jewish women from employment in top positions and from advancement.

There is a surprising lack of creative input into the Jewish scene by Jewish women's organizations. We who can produce Nobel prize-winners cannot project a comprehensive Jewish bookstore in New York or combine the half-dozen Jewish libraries in the same city in an accessible location; nor have we entered the no-woman's land of Judaica publishing. Our involvement in the neglected Jewish arts, music, theatre is at an all-time low.

It is obvious that the male agenda, with its emphasis on *gevaldige* "rescue" efforts to save Soviet Jewry and Israel, is still ours.

If we are to focus totally and obsessively on the need for money, then we ought to be creating a Jewish community chest of our own — Jewish women's organizations together, to set Jewish women's priorities on how our money should be spent. In addition to the Jewish arts, we should also address our expertise to Jewish child-care, Jewish education, care for poor elderly Jewish women and men (the Jewish agencies' denial and self-deception on this issue caused an absence of leadership in Government anti-poverty programs).

continued on page 44

"Any woman who has a great deal to offer the world is in trouble."
Hazel Scott on Hazel Scott, in **Ms.** Magazine.

"If men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament."
Flo Kennedy talks 'verbal karate,' in **Ms.**

"Black family life will be a disaster if it copies white family life."
Eleanor Holmes Norton talks about black feminism, in **Ms.**

"Like 60% of all the people on welfare in the United States, I am white...welfare is a woman's issue."
Marie Ratagick tells the truth about welfare, in **Ms.**

"The Sexual Revolution and the Women's Movement are polar opposites on philosophy, goals and spirit."
Anselma Dell' Olio talks about the sexual revolution, in **Ms.**

"We want live activists, not imprisoned martyrs. Yet, what do we do with our rage?"
Gloria Steinem on rape and retaliation, in **Ms.**

"I do not agree with your last article, and I am cancelling my wife's subscription."
Jane O'Reilly quotes a letter from an irate husband, in **Ms.**

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OY!

One feature of the hospital was the gorgeous girls in spotless white, the nurses who seemed to have passed a beauty test as well as an intelligence examination to gain admission to the staff. The "probationers" strove not to be outshone and the younger doctors were their captive observers.

HADASSAH MAGAZINE / OCTOBER 1975

Though it has its own hierarchical power structure, the synagogue serves traditionally as a refuge from the struggles of the marketplace, struggles for a sense of self-worth as well as for economic survival. And in these struggles, women are coming to play a more active role. One would not wish to sponsor a program that will convert the synagogue from a refuge to an arena where a man will feel that he must struggle again to defend his self-esteem; this, I suspect, is the psychologic truth behind the dictum: *ishah lo tikra batorah mipnei kvod ha'tsibur* (Megillah 23a). ("A woman should not read the Torah, out of respect for the congregation.")

The women naturally will ask why their self-esteem must be sacrificed in deference to those of shaky men. It seems unjust to recommend such a sacrifice, yet the society whose men have little self-respect and who are unreliable sexual partners is one which holds little gratification for women.

Although I know of no documentation, it is commonly reported nowadays that the new aggressiveness of women and their readiness to make demands in sexual relations has distinctly increased the frequency of impotence. Conversely, men with perverse sexual disposition would be especially aroused by the sight of women performing the roles traditionally reserved for men; in addition, the religious attitude would be precluded by their own sexual response.

This paper and the discussions that follow were originally delivered at the Rabbinical Assembly–Pastoral Psychiatry Conference, January 18, 1974, at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

Mortimer Ostow is Chairman of the Department of Pastoral Psychiatry of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

...ock singer Mama Ca... as 238-pound, 5 foot-five singer, wh had suffered recurring bouts exhaustion from a hect... ...usiness schedule, ...known in the business ... d... for fat girls what anothe... Jewi... star Barbra Streisand did for slain ones.

...Journal 3/1/74

Time 3 1/7/74 By TERENCE SM... Special to The New York ...

JERUSALEM, Jan. 7—The biggest upset in Israel's parliamentary election last week was achieved by a matronly red-haired mother of three who campaigned on a platform of consumerism, feminism and anti-estabilshmentism.

Shulamit Aloni, a 44-year-o... writer, lawyer and feminist, de... fied Israeli political tradition by bolting from the governing Labor party, running as an independent and winning.

Elected on the Labor party list in 1965, she caused a sensation when she appeared at the swearing-in ceremony on opening day in a low-cut black, sleeveless dress. Orthodox members protested and the buxom Mrs. Aloni henceforth appeared in less revealing attire.

The Young Leadership Cabinet of the United Jewish Appeal

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OY! VEY!

Driven to Distraction

The "Committee for the Defense of the Sanctity of Israel" has threatened to take action against the Egged bus cooperative if the company does not immediately stop training women as bus drivers. Shimon Turnheim secretary of the Committee listed some of the reasons why women should not drive buses:

- The *halakha* does not permit women to "lead around" groups of people as this opens the door to harlotry.
- Some of the women drivers wear "arrogant" clothing such as shorts and mini-skirts.
- God-fearing Jews who avoid all contact with women are forced to touch the driver as they give her the fare and take change.
- God-fearing Jews who avoid looking at a woman or her body are forced to look at the driver as they enter the bus and pay their fares.
- According to *halakha*, a man may not be alone in the same place with a strange woman; this might force God-fearing Jews to leave the bus before their destinations if the bus empties and they are left alone with a woman driver.

The Committee threatened to apply to the Supreme Court for a license to run a rival bus line to prevent Egged buses from entering areas inhabited by Orthodox Jews, and to undertake "unpleasant steps" to make the women drivers give up their jobs.

HADASSAH MAGAZINE / NOVEMBER 197

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THE JEWISH POST

Friday, December 20, 1974

THE LOX BOX

I've Got To Run!

By MARTIN MOSKOVITZ

I've been reading, with a great deal of interest, about the trend towards women taking an active part in ritual practices in the synagogue and being counted as a member of a minyon.

Moskovitz

It doesn't bother me really, to have a woman called to the torah.

And it doesn't upset me to walk into the shul and find that ten women have already started without me.

And I wouldn't be up tight if a woman were called to the bema to conduct services during the rabbi's vacation for instance.

What does concern me, however, is if I thought of my wife coming to me some evening, with a sink full of dirty dishes and saying: "I've got to run. They need a tenth for Mincha."

pillar on Jacob Pins
Israel map Sept '74

The old Arab house at 5 Ethiopia Street, Jerusalem, presided over by Pins' lovely Indonesian wife Elsa ("the pride of my Far Eastern collecti[illegible]e co

LILITH invites readers to submit items for the OY! VEY! section.

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★TSENA -RENA

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ONGOING RESEARCH

☐ Alternative ceremonies, blessings for modern needs (naming ceremonies, non-sexist marriage ceremonies, new moon, menstruation, weaning ceremonies, etc.) being collected for possible publication. Contact Cardin, 3624 Anton Farms Rd., Baltimore, Md. 21208. To request a specific ceremony, enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope.

☐ The Ezrat Nashim booklet of naming ceremonies is currently in production. Watch this column for details.

ENTERTAINMENT

☐ Bat Kol Players (named for the heavenly voice that spoke when the Jewish people needed clearer understanding of the written word) — 3-woman theatrical troupe with programs based on lives of women from the Jewish past.
130 E. 59 St., Room 473,
New York, NY 10022

FILMS

☐ "Yudie" — Portrait of older Jewish woman on New York's Lower East Side filmed by her niece, Mirra Bank.

☐ "Joyce at 34" — Working out 2 careers (his & hers), 1 marriage, 1 baby. By Joyce Chopra.

Both films from
New Day Films,
P.O.B. 315,
Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

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☐ Baltimore Women's Minyan — Contact Siegman,
3406 Labyrinth Rd.,
Baltimore, MD

☐ BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY Women's Minyan, Hillel

☐ BROWN UNIVERSITY Women's Minyan, Hillel

NEW YORK

☐ West Side Minyan — Mixed minyan, traditional but informal *havorah*-style.
Ansche Chesed Synagogue,
251 W. 100 St., 5th floor.
Contact Polay (212) 866-6403

☐ Gay Synagogue for Women and Men — Beth Simchat Torah,
151 Bank St.,
New York City
(P.O.B. 1270, New York, NY 10001).

PHILADELPHIA

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U. of P. Hillel
202 S. 36 St.,
Philadelphia, PA 19104

☐ Germantown Minyan — mixed minyan, traditional but informal *havura*-style.
Germantown Jewish Center
Lincoln Dr. & Ellet St.,
Philadelphia, PA.

ORGANIZATIONS

NATIONAL

☐ Women's Rabbinic Alliance — new organization of women rabbis and women rabbinical students including women in the U.S., England and Israel.
299 Riverside Dr., Apt. 3D
New York, NY 10025

BALTIMORE

☐ Jewish Feminist Organization,
Contact — Cheskis-Cotel,
3433 University Pl.,
Baltimore, MD 21218

LOS ANGELES

☐ Jewish Feminist Organization,
900 Hilgard Av.,
Los Angeles, CA 90024

NEW YORK

☐ Ezrat Nashim — dedicated to equality for women in Judaism. Speakers' Bureau (including outside the NY area)
(212) 875-4158.

☐ Jewish Feminist Organization College-Project — contact
Gewirtz Siegal,
588 West End Av.,
New York, NY 10024
(212) 234-7317 or for messages 595-9106.

RESOURCES FOR JEWISH WOMEN

★ "Go and see" (Seek enlightenment) the title of the Yiddish-language women's Bible with the portion of the week and folk tales. *TSENA-RENA* enabled women to educate themselves about the most basic resource—the Bible.

□ Jewish Women's Consciousness Raising Groups and women interested in planning NY Jewish women's center — Contact
Lowell,
161 W. 78 St.,
New York, NY 10024

PHILADELPHIA

□ N'shai Chayil (Women of Valor) — Philadelphia's first Jewish women's group. Resources include speakers' bureau and library.
1609 N. 77 St.,
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□ Jewish Women's Group — Consciousness raising groups, conferences, newsletter.
100 Holders Hill Rd.,
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Phone 362-6062.

ISRAEL

□ Feminist Movement of Israel — Speakers' bureau, library, newspaper, university day care centers, women's health issues, civil marriage legislation, etc.
P.O.B. 4667, Haifa and
P.O.B. 33041, Tel Aviv.

PUBLICATIONS

□ *A Guide to Local Jewish Women's Resources* (Los Angeles) — From a Jewish Feminist Perspective — Compiled by Sharon Abramowitz & Robin Heffler.
900 Hilgard Av.,
Los Angeles, CA 90024.

□ Newsletter for Jewish Single Adults — Events in New York City area including Westchester & Long Island. Published by
Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York
130 E. 59 St.,
New York, NY 10022
(212) 751-100 ext. 336.

□ *Her Mothers*, E. M. Broner (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, NY 1975 $7.95, 245 pp.) A new genre synthesizing fiction, drama and history in the author's search for models for today's women.

□ *Jewish Grandmothers*, edited by Sydelle Kramer & Jenny Masur (Beacon Press, Boston 1976 $7.95, 174 pp.) Ten autobiographical accounts of Jewish women who came to America early in the 20th century. Excellent history, each chapter a refutation of stereotypes.

□ *The Jewish Woman — New Perspectives*, edited by Elizabeth Koltun (Schocken, NY 1976, hardcover $12.95, paperback $6.95, 315 pp.) Essays on women and Judaism from a feminist perspective, an outgrowth of Response magazine's Anthology on the Jewish Woman, 1973.

□ *The Jewish Woman in America*, Charlotte Baum, Paula Hyman, Sonya Michel (Dial Press, NY 1976, $8.95, 290 pp.) Good descriptive and analytical history of Jewish women in America from European background through current myths and stereotypes.

□ *Judaism and the New Woman*, Rabbi Sally Priesand (Behrman House, NY 1975, paperback $2.45, 144 pp.) Informative, albeit oversimplified discussion from a Reform viewpoint.

□ *The Plough Woman — Memoirs of the Pioneer Women of Palestine*, edited by Rachel Katznelson Shazar (Herzl Press, NY 1975, paperback $3.95, 300 pp. From Herzl Press, 515 Park Av., New York, NY 10022). Indispensable personal records of the young Jewish women who struggled to participate as equals in the rebuilding of Eretz Israel, mainly in the early years of the 20th century. Unfortunately, this new edition omits the memorials included in the 1932 edition to comrades who died or were killed building the country.

□ *Sisters of Exile: Sources on the Jewish Woman* (Ichud Habonim, NY paperback, 151 pp. $2.50 + 50 cents postage — bulk rates available — from *Sisters of Exile*, Ichud Habonim, 575 Sixth Av., New York, NY 10011). Source material on Jewish women from the Bible, through the Talmud, Eastern Europe, pre-state Israel and today.

LILITH SOURCES

continued from page 8

> Naamah "goes forth and makes sport with men and conceives from them through their lustful dreams." . . . [The offspring] all go to the ancient Lilith who brings them up. She goes out into the world and seeks her little ones and when she sees little children she cleaves to them in order to kill them and to insinuate herself into their spirits (*Zohar III, 76b*).

The implication from this and other sources is that Lilith has no children of her own. On this point, Gershom Scholem cites *Torat HaSheydim* (15th - 16th century) which states that of the four demon queens, only Lilith is unable to give birth; because she is frigid she blots the face of the earth. These revelations are quite astonishing when one recalls all the literature on Lilith's children.

Lilith the Child-Slayer: The tradition of Lilith as a slayer of children is seen in the midrash in *Numbers Rabbah*: " . . . like Lilith, who, when she can find no strange children, slays her own" (*16:25*). This Lilith seems to resemble the Babylonian female demon Labartu or Lamashtu, for the child-slayer image has no foundation in the Talmud and certainly no connection with the first Eve. Since scholars differ widely as to the dating of *Numbers Rabbah*, it is difficult to determine whether the author of the *Alphabet* based his portrayal of Lilith as the evil spirit who harms babies on this source, or whether both drew from a common antecedent. In any case, the unity of the motifs of promiscuity and child-slaying does not occur until the time of the *Zohar* (see *Zohar 1 19b*).

Lilith's character, then, is a maze of contradictions, interweaving a variety of legends and traditions. If we isolate all the strands of demonology, separating the various interpolations of Lilitu, the wind-spirit; Labartu, the child-slayer; Lamashtu, the Greek Lamia, Lilith, the night-demon, we are left with the story of the first Eve who may or may not have claim to the name Lilith in the first place.

Stripped of the overlay of medieval mysticism and demonology this Lilith emerges as an independent spirit. Had she succeeded in her battle with Adam for equal rights, Lilith might today represent that spark of original creativity in whose image women could retrace and recreate their history. Instead history plunged her into the depths of demonhood. Only in the twentieth century, which has no use for *sheydim*, may the Lilith, who has been obscured by the mists of demonology these thousands of years, be revealed today as the first woman on earth, equal to man and a free spirit. ϟ

Judy Weinberg is a student of Talmud at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

THE LILITH QUESTION

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is not a character at all but a hodge-podge of negative traits that contradict each other (seductive/frigid; mother of demons/sterile) and thus cancel each other out. We can relegate all these contradictory traits to the realm of differing speculations as opposed to a definite image that all agreed upon. We can thus do what Jewish tradition does with King David: accept the essence, glorify the essence, and reject the later additions as contradictory, contaminated by fear and distrust, and not central to the intrinsic nature of the character of Lilith.

Finally, we must ask ourselves: which Lilith is closer to the spirit of the first account in Genesis, the account that tells us how God first created human beings — the female who accepts the idea of equality and fights for it, or the female who has lost sight of the original struggle and persists in seeking revenge? There is no doubt that the Lilith who claimed her equal birthright with Adam is closer in spirit to both the original Biblical account and to Jewish women of today.

Jews have periodically created movements to "return to the source" of Judaism, and Jewish history is replete with such efforts. When we struggle for equality of woman and man and see Lilith as the personification of that struggle, we are part of this tradition of returning to the source and building from its pure, uncontaminated foundation. This pure beauty is contained in the words "And God created the human species . . . man and woman created He them." The equality of man and woman is embodied in that sentence. This equality must be embodied in our lives if humankind and all the values we hold dear are to survive. ϟ

Aviva Cantor-Zuckoff is a founding member of the LILITH Editorial Board, the Jewish Feminist Organization, and the Socialist Zionist Union.

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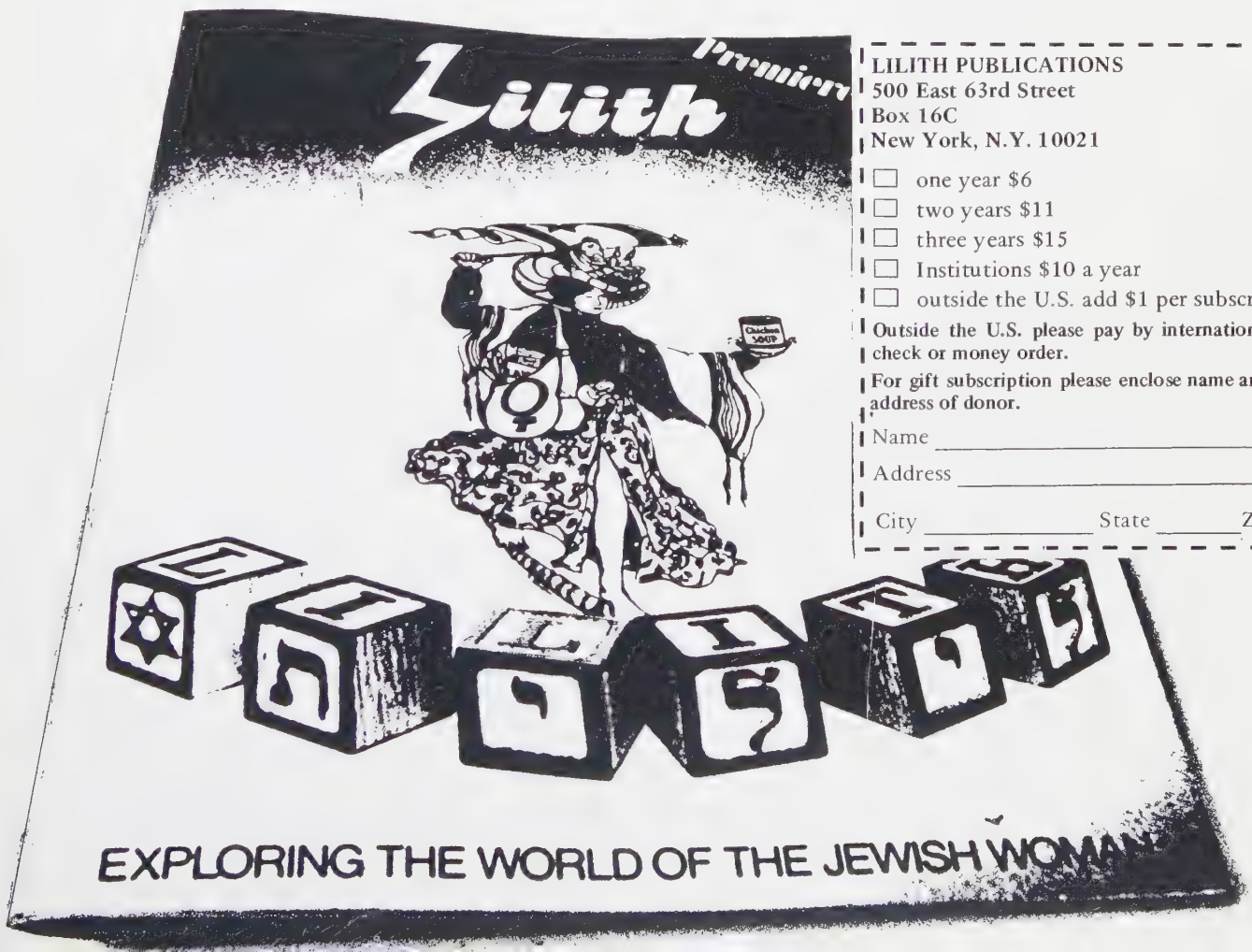

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FRIEDAN AT 55

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Blacks and other people were battling for now.

"I had atheistic bar mitzvahs for my boys. We were living in Rockland County, where most of the Jews among our friends were Unitarians. I always hated that. We sent out invitations saying, 'In the tradition of our ancestors we invite you to celebrate the thirteenth birthday of our son Daniel' or 'our son Jonathan.' When Emily was 13, I had thought of saying, 'improving on the tradition of our ancestors,' but I was in the throes of divorce and I don't think she wanted it."

In discussing Jewish children and their parents, Friedan touched on the conflicting images Jewish women often have of themselves. "The tradition of the Jewish mother is so strong, it's easier to make Jewish women feel guilty all the time if they have career goals and other interests outside the family. The conflicts are exacerbated for Jewish women in what I call 'breaking through the feminine mystique' because there's really a basic put-down of women. The role of the Jewish woman is to somehow serve the family, serve the children.

"On the other hand, Jewish women have energy, ability. They've been brought up to be good in school. They have all these abilities that then they're not supposed to use. In the middle class at least, you were supposed to marry the doctor, not be one."

Speaking of her own mother in an interview with Paul Wilkes in *The New York Times*, Friedan said, " . . . it was obvious she belittled, cut down my father because she had no place to channel her terrific energies. It's a typical female disorder that I call impotent rage."*

"Younger Jewish women," Friedan says, "as the result of the women's movement, are without all this *sturm und drang*. My daughter takes it for granted that she's going to have serious professional work and she absolutely intends to marry and have children. She doesn't see any conflict. She's the result of women's liberation."

While Friedan had no particular sense of Jewish role models when she was growing up, she says, "When books started coming out like *His Mother's Kisses* and *Portnoy's Complaint*, they always made me feel very uncomfortable because there's enough truth in them. The Jewish mother was made to be a cancer to her children because of all her energy poured into such a role. My children always tease me about being a Jewish mother, but it's probably been their saving that I had enough work of my own that I didn't do their homework for them."

While Friedan believes that "you don't have to hate men, repudiate marriage and disdain childbearing to be a liberated woman," she is most critical of rabbis' telling Jewish women it is their duty to have three, four or five children. "To suddenly again try to treat women as breeders is outrageous," Friedan says. "If you want Jewish women to have more children, you have to be strongly supportive of institutional changes so women don't have to choose between professional advancement and political participation and child-rearing."

As Friedan believes there's a sound basis for the stereotype of the Jewish mother, she also believes the stereotype of the Jewish American Princess is not just a myth. "Sure, there's truth in it," she says. "And that's the woman that's bred to take advantage of this female role in a way I think is outrageous. In the end, it's very stunting to a woman's own growth and not so good for the men, either.

"A lot of women are threatened by the equality that is the essence of the women's movement. As a result of the movement, it's not going to be so easy to be a Jewish American Princess and expect that just because you're born a woman you are entitled to be taken care of all of your life."

Equality is much less of a rallying point for Israeli women than for post-"feminine mystique" Americans. As a result, Friedan's experience in Israel was not exactly a homecoming. "I was treated with such hostility," she says. "It was like the McCarthy era, when people suspected of being Communists were told to go back to Russia. I was told, 'Go back to America and take the Israeli women's libbers with you.' Women were very defensive. It reminded me of the U.S. in the feminine mystique era just before the women's movment started." (Friedan's work *The Feminine Mystique* was published in 1963.)

"I had thought there was such equality, with women serving in the Israeli army. But the army is where they really learned sex roles. They feel they won't have much future on their own and rush to get married as soon as they get out of the army.

"Even in the kibbutz, girls are almost pushed into childcare and other traditional women's work. They're not given a chance to aspire to anything else. Their defensiveness towards me was related to all of that, and they horrified me."

Friedan was writing an article highly critical of Israel when the Yom Kippur war broke out, and she decided it was no time to run such a piece.

Friedan views the war as the great awakening for Israeli women. She quotes Dr. Dorit Padan-Eisenstark (the distinguished Israeli sociologist recently killed in an automobile accident) as telling her, "Suddenly women's eyes were opened. They realized they weren't trained to do some of the things that were necessary to do."

Friedan seems to have a belief in the inevitability of the women's movement. She minimizes the influence of other forces in Israel, a family-centered society with the home as the center of security in an insecure country. Her prediction: "Women who have studied in the U.S. and who identify very strongly with the women's movement want to get something like that going in Israel. I think when it starts there, it's going to go very fast. First, because the state was built with a commitment to equality for women even though they got stuck in the middle somehow. Second, because they need women in the labor force. Third, because Jewish women, like Jewish men, especially in Israel, are brought up to be strong."

When it comes to Jewish women and Jewish institutions in America, she is most disturbed at "the Jewish leadership's insensitivity to the importance of equality for women and the fact that some Jewish organizations are coming out against affirmative action programs for women and Blacks. This implicitly condones sex and race discrimination, and this is very, very bad. They really don't count Jewish women as people." For example, when one prominent Jewish organization concluded that affirmative action hindered Jews' acceptance into law schools, they did not count Jewish women, who actually benefited from pressures to accept not only more minority group applicants but also more women.

"It's absolutely incumbent on Jewish women to protest and to withdraw their support from any Jewish organization that doesn't take action against sex and race discrimination."

As for the United Jewish Appeal's policy of not letting women be part of the Young Leadership Cabinet, Friedan said, "Until there's a change, women shouldn't give to UJA, and they certainly shouldn't collect money for it."

Betty Friedan sees a Jewish women's movement as part of a large, wide-reaching women's movement. She explains, "I think it's the health of the women's movement, the reason it can't be destroyed. Even if NOW as an organization or any other organization were destroyed or co-opted, you couldn't destroy the whole movement because it's organized in all these diverse caucuses that confront the concrete conditions and issues. It's very important for women whose prime focus has been activities of organized Jewry to zero in on what the sex roles within these institutions do to Jewish women, Jewish men and Jewish children."

To the Jewish Feminist Organization and anyone else concerned about working for changes within Jewish institutions, her advice is: "While a certain amount of consciousness raising is fine, don't

wallow in it. Organize around taking action on concrete issues. That will change you, create you as new women.

"Otherwise the agenda is the same as for the rest of the women's movement: to affirm the personhood of woman and her right to participate in the mainstream of society, including organized Jewish society. And then to unmask all the ways that sex discrimination is built into the institution, into the language, the practices, the images as well as the overt barriers, and break through them.

"But to do this not in man-the-enemy fashion but with the understanding that you can't have real equality for women if something different doesn't happen for men. It's a question of breaking through sex roles for both." ϟ

*For an analysis of how other Jewish women have transferred their own success drives onto their husbands, see "High Price of 'Failure'" by Mary Schwartz, p. 21.

Amy Stone is a member of the editorial board of LILITH Magazine.

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MARJORIE MORNINGSTAR

continued from page 15

"....All girls, including you, are too goddamn emancipated nowadays," wrote Noel.... "A woman should ... do what women are born and built to do — sleep with some man, rear his kids and keep him reasonably happy while he does his fragment of the world's work. They're not really happy doing anything else.... The Nazis are the only ones who've come right out with it. And saying it doesn't make it wrong, either...."

the current form of the nuclear family with the woman playing a zombie wife and mother.

There are fewer and fewer Marjorie Morningstars around and, for that matter, nobody of any age or sex is today a virgin untouched by a sense that the old sexual structures are mutable matters. The educated Jewish woman today is more sophisticated about Judaism and woman's role than Marjorie Morningstar. She no longer deludes herself with the simplistic formula that Judaism depends essentially upon a series of gastronomic and genital don'ts. She knows that the future of Judaism doesn't rest on her fragile vaginal membrane.

The educated Jewish woman today is also forced to ask ultimate questions about being both a woman and Jewish. Her questions and challenges and even her defection from her traditional role will not bring down the ancient structure of Judaism. On the contrary, it is possible that the ferment roused by the conjunction of live questions about Judaism and about female identity will engender a new perspective and produce an energy that will make the House of Israel a place that contemporary Jews can live in. ♄

Elenore Lester is a journalist and critic who writes frequently for The New York Times. *Her articles and reviews have also appeared in the* New Republic, MS., *the* Village Voice, Midstream *and the* Jewish Week. *She teaches contemporary theatre at New York University and initiated courses there on the images of women in media and the arts.*

WOMEN AND JEWISH LAW

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groping for genuine experiences in prayer, and pointing out the historical precedents for *halachic* change will not solve the *halachic* problems of Jewish women. We are still faced with a largely intransigent establishment and with a community which backs away from visions of confrontation.

Some women who want change badly enough will wrestle with the choice of opting out of the community altogether. I would argue that this is not a solution — neither for the individual, nor for the Jewish community. It is better — more painful, but more fruitful and more Jewish — to be a maverick within the community, than a *tzaddik* (righteous one) outside it. Furthermore, we have a responsibility to the community; it needs our participation as much as we desire to assume new responsibilities; it needs those who pressure for revitalization from within, as much as every Jew needs a vital community.

I do not wish to flout rabbinic leadership; rather, I would hope it would grow and have greater impact on my life. Yet rabbinic leadership today is still making rules and creating conditions that keep women in a secondary place, and we cannot accept all of these rules passively. Change must be generated by women who are observant, loyal to the *halachic* system and to the Jewish community. There is a psychological difference between breaking the rules and growing beyond them. The second perspective upholds the integrity of tradition, and maintains continuity with it, as in each generation of Jews in renewing their covenant with God.

It will help us if we view our self-actualization in Heschelian terms — that each Jew should see him/herself ascending the ladder of observance, going higher and higher as he/she gains experience and sensitivity. It will aid us if we remember that we are moving towards equality in a system whose basic tenet is equality; thus, we are helping Judaism live up to its own values by eliminating the liabilities and limitations placed upon one sex. It will help us, too, if we remember and understand that the *halachic* system is not a house of cards ready to topple if we blow at it. Our long history has proved that faith in Judaism's ability to mature is well placed.

The accusation has been made that it is not really interest in Judaism, but rather feminism that is the thrust behind the new push for women's self-actualization within Judaism. I believe that there is some truth to this charge. Yet I see it as a blessing.

What is it, after all, that women are seeking? They are not asking to be released from religious obligations, rather they are asking to enter more fully into the spiritual life. The notion of *kiruv levavot* (welcoming souls ready to embrace the Jewish tradition, for whatever reason) is a powerful one that is lost on all but a few of the organized bodies within contemporary Jewish life.

If feminism is a way back to Judaism, we should appreciate it, not only in terms of numbers so hard to recoup after the Holocaust, but for the new blood and life it will bring to Jewry today and tomorrow. ϟ

Blu Greenberg lectures on Religious Studies at the College of Mt. St. Vincent and is a graduate student in Jewish history at Yeshiva University. She is a faculty member of the Institute for Women Today, an inter-religious feminist organization. She delivered the keynote address to the First National Jewish Women's Conference in February, 1973. A longer version of this article is part of an anthology on the Jewish woman currently being prepared by Rachel Adler and Aron Hirt-Manheimer.

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HIGH PRICE OF FAILURE

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need of the family, even this kind of job is sometimes seen by the wife as a threat to the husband's masculinity. The wife's concerns about hurting her husband's already much beleaguered sense of self, are invariably mixed with anger and contempt for the man she now regards as her feeble partner.

An even more difficult problem comes when the wife wants to plan a more ambitious career for herself, one that will enable her to develop and grow in a world of outside work. Here, the second commandment, "thou shalt not surpass thy husband in money, prestige, or job satisfaction," has devastating results. For if one's husband has a job in which he feels successful, this enables the woman to develop without fear of surpassing him. If, on the other hand, as in these families, the husband has little job satisfaction of either a financial, intellectual or status nature, the woman feels her space for growth painfully limited. I have observed an amazing variety of cop-out strategies that wives use to prevent any really constructive vocational development for themselves. After the cop-out often comes resentment against the husband, physical symptoms, profound depression and a feeling of being dead inside.

All in all, it is not a pretty picture. But sex oppression it is, and it's about time we begin to look at it. ϟ

Mary C. Schwartz is an Associate Professor at the School of Social Work, State University of New York at Buffalo. She has taught Social Work there for six years, and has published numerous articles on the subject of casework issues concerning women. Before teaching, she practiced for seven years at Jewish Family Service agencies in two different cities. She is married and has two children.

FEAR OF FEMINISM

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at this point that we must step back and confront our own fears.

Acting responsibly also must include a scrupulous examination of our male privileges as Jewish men. This means understanding the privileges that men have traditionally held in Jewish and non-Jewish cultures. It means understanding the specific ways in which each of us has benefited and continues to benefit from being male. And it means acting on this knowledge in order to end our power trips over women. If the concept of male privilege seems distant and unclear, this only indicates that we have a lot of reading and thinking ahead of us.

Of course, acting responsibly also means fighting against men and institutions that perpetuate male supremacy and privilege. On a political level, this means supporting feminist initiatives within the secular culture and within the Jewish community. On an individual level, it means continually speaking out against any man's sexist jokes, looks, stereotypes, smears, and outright attacks. It means breaking male bonds, it means challenging other men, it means risking male wrath, and it often means losing male friends.

Finally, acting responsibly necessitates constant awareness that we are men and benefit from male privilege no matter what we do. This means that our voices will be heard at the same time that women are ignored, and that even our sincere actions can lead to new patterns of male dominance. The "liberated man" or "male feminist" can be just one more power play. Thus, we must never attempt to speak for women or forget who we are. We must understand and defend women's right to space and time of their own, away from men – even supposedly concerned men – in order to freely determine their own priorities, strategies, and life choices. Sometimes, we act most responsibly by simply staying out of the way of women – and yet we cannot use this knowledge as an excuse for total inaction, for there are many situations in which we must fight our own and other men's sexism.

I believe that these are our choices as Jewish men. And I believe that it is time for us to begin acting responsibly. We've oppressed Jewish women for more than 5,000 years. That's long enough. ↳

(I would like to thank Harlene Hipsch, Steve Nachtigall, Julie Dorfman, Amy Stone and Shifra Bronznick for reading and making important criticisms of earlier drafts of this article. Any faults are my responsibility and not theirs. – B.L.)

Bob Lamm is a free-lance writer whose work has appeared in Response, WIN, Jewish Digest, *and* Morning Due. *He teaches classes on "Men, Masculinity, and Sexism" and "The Politics of Sports" at Queens College, C.U.N.Y.*

BEYOND SHMATTES

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The wasteland that is Jewish TV and radio ought to be quickly reclaimed. To watch the Sunday morning TV ghetto is to see rabbis and Jewish male leaders hold forth with rarely a Jewish female appearing. This is related to the minimal visibility of Jewish women's organizations, stifled as they are by "modesty" as a Jewish virtue women have been conditioned to maintain. They have not provided images in the news, radio or television of sophisticated Jewish women's activity, in tune with today's world, aside from advertisements and award-giving luncheons filled with gimmickry and dedicated to service.

We need Jewish women heretical enough to suggest that the money they could save from too many membership organizations could be better applied to the provision of projects to consolidate our forces. It's time for tightening-up, for simplifying, as an antidote to the extreme territoriality of Jewish women's organizations. It's time, too, that Jewish women's organizations had their own Assembly.

One can find little or no stock-taking by Jewish women's organizations. One exception was the late '75 survey of Jewish women leadership in local USA Federations initiated by women at the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds. Even the Leadership Conference of Jewish Women's Organizations, an informal group of women leaders, issues no reports and keeps its traditional "modesty." A summing-up of women's organizations' "works and days" and an examination of our image and practices suggested here would be useful, necessary and is past due.

In this year of the Bicentennial, Jewish women's organizations are in some ways better than those of American women. One reads the history of suffragism—the first feminist wave—and wishes we could read more of ourselves in it. We were then in the first blush of post-immigrant mobility and could not "risk" what we can today. We have a chance at participating in the second wave. Let's not stand on the shore. Let's swim out and meet it. ↳

Doris B. Gold was the NOW (National Organization for Women) Eastern Regional Coordinator for its Volunteerism Task Force (1974-76) and author of an essay on "Women and Voluntarism" published in Woman in Sexist Society, *a feminist anthology edited by Vivian Gornick and Barbara Moran (Basic Books, 1971). She has worked as a Jewish professional and writer both in New York and in the Midwest, occasionally with Jewish women's groups; she is the former editor of the* Young Judaean Magazine *(1964-1972).*

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